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CHILDISH AMERICANS

A DIAGNOSIS OF OUR NATIONAL MALADY

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OUR chief deficiency as a people, our most conspicuous national shortcoming is a condition of maldevelopment to which the name Adult-Infantilism is given. There is much to indicate that we are a nation of adult-infants, and not a little to prove it. Adult-infantilism is responsible for more social maladjustment, more family discord, and more intellectual vagrancy than any disease, derangement, or other disharmony of mind and body. And the number of people thus afflicted seems to be increasing. Why should this blight have come upon us and whence has it come? What is it and where is it leading us?

The gravamen of the charge is sustained by our individual and national conduct, by our literary and artistic life, by our prejudices and beliefs, our boastings and our satisfactions, our gregariousness and our restlessness.

Who has not heard the child say to his companion, "My house is bigger than yours"—"I can run faster than you can"—"My father can lick yours any day"—"My doll can talk and yours can't"?

Parents pretend to correct this boasting, but in reality it often amuses them. Carried into adult life, it is manifest when Mr. Jones adds a wing to his house after his neighbor has added a side-porch to his own. It prompts such statements as "There is not a man in the world who can lick Tilden," and "Jack Dempsey is the greatest fighter the world has ever seen." It makes the visitor from Dallas or from Cleveland sneer at the Cathedral of Chartres because both steeples are not identical, compare the Corniche road unfavorably with Lakeside Drive, and it suggests to the New Yorker that the picturesqueness of San Gimignano's moldering towers is not a patch on that of lower New York.

It accounts for that self-satisfaction with which we hold aloof from the affairs of other nations, and for that self-esteem which leads us to believe in the superiority of our institutions and the

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righteousness of our conduct. It is the basis of our determination to regulate man's conduct by legislation—to say what he shall not teach and what he shall not drink. We have more colleges and universities than any country of the world, and yet we are the worst educated, the least cultured. We have more churches, chapels, and civic-centers than any country of Europe, yet we are swayed by religious prejudice that transcends the understanding of Europeans. We have a climate that has no equal, yet we flee from it as though its atmosphere were mephitic. We have comforts that kings might consider luxuries, yet it is real punishment for us to stay at home; we have wealth and occupation, but little of that peace of mind surpassing wealth which the Sage finds in meditation.

Why? Because so many of us are emotionally infantile.

II

What is meant by Adult-infantilism? The condition and conduct of an individual who, having reached maturity of physical development, remains infantile in his responses to the demands and obligations of life. One may be infantile on the physical, the intellectual, or on the affective side, but the term ordinarily is limited to lack of development in the field of the emotions. Bodily infantilism is usually so apparent that it does not need to be pointed out; dwarfs, pygmies, and midgets are its victims. Intellectual arrest of development is equally obvious, and a man whose mental faculties have not kept pace with his age is labeled "moron" without aid of physician or psychologist. But infantility seizes chiefly upon the man or woman whose emotional (affective) make-up lags behind his or her physical and intellectual development. It is all the more dangerous because it is not usually accompanied by any obvious manifestation and is not considered an infirmity. Indeed, such emotional backwardness is often accepted as engaging, attractive, amusing. The adult-infant is not aware of his handicap, and often goes through life ignorant of his part in the disaster and misfortunes he encounters or causes. He blames them on fate, on the malignity of others, on unfair treatment. His limitation prevents him from looking to himself for the cause, and he is likely to engender children whose burden will increase proportionately with their inability to cope with it.

We are adult infants, and we enjoy it. We do not experience pleasure or fulfillment in the thought that we are grown-up individuals prepared to meet struggle and hardship. We think that the longer we remain impervious to life's warning the luckier we are; that if life would only spare us its blows we should be happy.

Children do not like to carry a thing to its logical conclusion; they do not like to think connectedly or protractedly; they do not like to think at all. They like to have others do it for them. Grown-up Americans experience similar likes and dislikes. They leave it to their aldermen and legislators, their priests and their newspapers, to think for them.

Children are notoriously gregarious; they shun solitude. They wish to be in the limelight and to have the attention of others directed toward their activities. The good fellowship of which we boast, our "rotariness," as it were, our "clubiness," is carried over to our adult life from early associations, from barn-clubs, dancing-classes, smoking-behind-the-shed-clubs, school and college clubs.

When we play we bring into our games a dignity and soberness that children have when they play "father and mother," or we go to the other extreme and display a jovial exuberance and enthusiasm which is neither becoming nor really felt. These are typical childish traits. However, there is a process of adjustment or of unconscious rationalization that takes place in the mind of the "player" and influences his attitude, for it is no rare thing to see

an American man who in his own country carries his office-mask of sobriety to the golf links become boisterous and garrulously gay when on the links at Cannes, Le Touquet, or Inverness.

Who has not seen at one of the big football games a dignified-looking, elderly gentleman throw off his coonskin coat, scale the ramparts, grasp a megaphone, and lead the cheering? His emotions will no longer tolerate repression. He is a boy again, and glad of it. And he is one of a great army of adults who regard such games seriously. We aver that football engenders courage, teaches fair treatment of opponents, develops backbone and will power, which is all buncombe. It does not do any of these things. Fewer heroes are recruited from football fields than from factories, and the man who displays signal courage or bravery when it is called for is more likely to have spent his spare time in college reading Keats and Baudelaire than charging upon the gridiron and breaking opponents' ribs.

Foreign visitors to this country, especially those from countries where reality has competed successfully with romance, are amused at American men, gray at the temple and thin in the neck, when, asking the whereabouts of their wives, say, "Where are the girls?" and amazed when they hear stately matrons refer to their husbands as "the boys." The American is reluctant to acknowledge that he has lost his hold on youth; he wants to be playful, and his wife wants to be kittenish.

Our childishness is most conspicuous when we are abroad; our wit banal, our conversation trivial, our conduct herdish, our thoughts superficial. Our aim is to be seen, heard, and envied. Who has not seen Americans in the smoking-room of ocean liners, in cafés of Ritz hotels, in Maxim's, or at Monte Carlo, acting like schoolboys at their first party? How straight-laced an American captain of industry can be at home, and how loose-laced abroad! Hence, our reputation for naïveté and credulity. Europeans tell us we are clever and resourceful, but they tell one another behind our backs that we are childish. Would anyone who has the intuition and discernment that M. Caillaux is reputed to have, comport himself as he did in Washington last October if he were not convinced that we are babes?

We are as infantile regarding our laws as we are about many other things. There is no better way to encourage the average child to do something than to forbid him to do it. Immediately he bends his energies and concentrates his thoughts on accomplishing it. There is no surer way to make us thirst for alcohol, which in reality most of us do not need and few of us formerly craved, than to tell us we can't buy, make, or drink it. We advocate speed laws for motor cars, and we break them when opportunity presents; but we are insistent that others should obey them, and we are secretly glad when we see a policeman handing a summons to a reckless motorist. If that is not a childish trait, then there are none.

There are few things more torturing to a child's pride and self-respect than to be different from other children, or to have to dress differently. Self-consciousness invades the soul of the child made to wear clothes not popular with other children. Originality and individuality are taboo among children—and they seem to be so with us. Let a woman carry a walking stick or a man wear spats anywhere save in a metropolis, and they will receive disapprobation as heartfelt as it is manifest. Note one of our conventions to which we bow the knee: straw hats shall not be worn after the fifteenth of September. Sometimes we have tropical weather then and later, but that does not matter, for if we wear a straw hat after that date boys will jeer and men will jibe. We are continually conforming to conventions that we may not suffer the opprobrium of being thought "unlike" others. And we carry this fear and compulsion to the

higher concerns of life: we regard individuality of thought and sentiment in others as "queer" and not quite decent.

Our thought is standardized because we refuse to grow up and think for ourselves; we are unable to purge ourselves of the fear of ridicule. This is particularly true of our literature. One can hardly picture James Joyce, Dorothy Richardson, T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust, Tchehov, Gogol, developing in this country. When one of their type originates here we treat him as a pariah; we call him bad names, we impute his personal morality, and we warn the public to shun him.

Emotions are budding in the child; their blossoms are ready to be gemmed as soon as he reaches the age of discretion; they need only attention and guidance so that a stately tree hung with copious fruit may result. But in the same manner as they are budding in the child, they are repressed in adults. We are a nation of emotionally repressed people, and nowhere do we display Adult-infantilism so conspicuously as in the direction and management of our fundamental urges, our primitive instincts. The American man is reputed to be the best provider and the poorest lover in the world; the American woman the best looking and the least temperamental. Neither perhaps merits the reputation. But we treat the genesic instinct like a stepchild; we feed it, but the food is of the plainest—no spicing and little care given to the serving of it. Love is something to be proud of when firmly bitted, securely curbed, and thoroughly groomed, Uncurried and unbridled, it is sure to run away with its mount. It has to be "trained." We pretend it is indecent to train it; immoral to guide it when it is being put through its preliminary paces; immodest to discuss it. We are loath to display the manifestations of love, and we throw a cloak of secrecy over the one passion of man which connects him directly with God. This has always been a puzzle to those who have not studied New England's origins, while those who have see little hope of breaking down these inveterate prejudices by other than extreme measures. If our thoughts were no more occupied with sex and its natural entailments than our conversation is, there would be nothing to fear. It would make for an emotionally insensitive nation, for whom the most marvelous and ennobling of natural functions—and one which is nearest to the supernatural—would have no more meaning than the necessity of ordering food so that we may eat. But such is not the case; we regard love as one of the most beautiful of emotions until we come in contact with it, and then shame, reluctance, modesty, puritanism, or whatever one wishes to call it, enters into play and makes us attempt to revert instantly to the time when we believed in Prince Charming and were contented with the stork myth. It may be the fault of our education—it is more probably the fault of our ancestry—but there prevails in America a feeling that love, emotional response to beauty of any sort, is something we should not discuss or display except within rigidly conventional limits. We ignore or make light of life's greatest responsibilities—and that is a childish trait.

III

Our personal achievements and accomplishments evoke a similarly childish, emotional response. We pride ourselves grossly and turbulently on what we have done; we experience a glow of satisfaction when we have succeeded in defeating an adversary; and we are loud in our self-praise and laudation. So are children. "I got the best mark and I am the cleverest of all," is the note that echoes through our masterful lives. Our impulsiveness, our generosity, our lavishness, our egregious hospitality, are all hang-overs from childhood. They are laudable impulses, praiseworthy possessions, priceless gifts, but they should be *transformed*, not merely transferred from childhood.

"Be sure to come and see me when you come to New York" we say to a man who, ten minutes before was a stranger; and when he comes we dine him, cocktail him, and parade him till he is cast down in his digestion and puffed up in his pride. A pianist or a prize fighter, a politician or a priest, a royal wife-hunter or a republican wife-beater, a Coué or a clown are received and feted by us royally. When we are in their countries we are sometimes chagrined that our hospitality is not reciprocated, our exuberance not retaliated.

It is asserted that American people will succumb to anything, reasonable or otherwise, if it is sufficiently advertised; they will overstep any limit, too, if the bait is fashionable or popular. We have had more "crazes" and "fads" in our country in the past fifty years than any other country can boast of in twice that time.

Forty years ago the "whole world," save all paralyzed and epileptic, was on roller-skates. Once this fair country was dotted with "rinks"; now there remains but one in Philadelphia to recall this skating urge of our parents. A little later we nearly forgot how to walk in our enthusiasm for "wheels." It was no uncommon sight in New York of a Sunday morning to see thousands riding up and down Broadway and Riverside Drive. Bicycles have given way to the craze for motor cars; it is a poor man indeed who cannot take his family out on week-end motor trips. Mah-Jong swept the country two years ago, and its popularity might have endured longer had not "cross-word puzzles" dethroned it. And now we are so absorbed in "listening in" to cheap music and cheaper wit that we have no time to loaf and invite our souls.

And we do not confine ourselves to passing enthusiasms over pastimes and sports, which threaten the harmony of our spiritual life. In no other country can doctrines of supernaturalism develop in such brief time and thrive to such wondrous extent. Waves of mysticism have passed over us and turned our beliefs and our hopes in directions that had not been foreseen by the established Church. Last winter New Thought was the great topic of conversation; this had been somewhat prepared for by the Coué craze, which made parrots out of human beings. But these were as naught compared with the excitement caused by the vulgarization of Freud's theories, over which the country is still exercised.

We are constantly shifting our viewpoints, because we have little focusing power. A passing idea attracts our attention, but we cannot concentrate on it—we are too afraid meanwhile that another idea may go by unnoticed.

Children never remain long at one thing; they tire of it as soon as it has yielded its first glamour of novelty, and their attention and interest are directed toward the next thing until that, too, loses its savor. We are as bad as children in this respect. We cannot withstand leisure, nor can we find within ourselves or within our books, in people or in environment, appeasement and satisfaction. We charge the atmosphere with making us restless, but we are restless because of our distractibility, our continual seeking for new sensations, anticipating that the morrow should bring something that to-day has not brought. Satiety comes in the wake of prosperity: we build palatial homes in the city and country which affront the eyes of the foreigner; but we tire of them if our days are prolonged and our children sell them as soon as we pass on. In most parts of this country it is rare to find a house in which a family has lived during three generations, and the New Yorker who lives in the house in which he was born hardly exists.

This lack of stability from one generation to the other is one of the gravest phenomena of Adult-infantilism. We are justified in laying this charge to our parents; they are responsible for our infirmity. Had they treated us wisely, or even fairly, we should be able to follow

in the footsteps of their forebears and grow up into men and women of balance, of maturity, of poise.

The men who wrought to transform us from a group of colonies to a nation were the forebears of those who in the nineteenth century wrote their names indelibly upon the annals of time. Why does our mental equipment and emotional endowment compare unfavorably with that of our parents and grandparents? There is scarcely a man in this country, with one notable exception, who is carrying on as his distinguished father or grandfather did in lighting the world, in building its railroads, in diversifying its commerce, in transforming our resources into capital. There is a reason for this. Parents in their love and in their imbecility have thought that it made for the welfare of their sons and daughters to spare them the trials and hardships that they themselves endured. Many of these parents have lived to see their sons refused entrance by universities. Many others have been obliged to devote their time and money to persuading the modern Delilah to spare their sons' hair.

What an interesting chapter the rise and fall of any one of our "first families" would make! I recently visited a tomb which in its grandeur compares with that of the great Florentine pawnbrokers in the Church of San Lorenzo and with the Panteon de los Reyes in the Escorial. It contains the remains of one who three generations ago laid the foundation of a fabulous fortune by transporting us, our goods, and our produce. Time has shown that he had vision, imagination, courage, decision, and determination—and many descendants. Have any of them displayed a tithe of the qualities of their great forebear? Their names are frequently in the "society" columns of newspapers, but the "news" connected with their names is often not to their credit.

I am not contending that genius is or is not hereditary. I am stating that good blood ought not to peter out in one or two generations, and that it does not in any country save our own. There is something, apparently, in this land of the free that is capable of destroying the fine fiber of personality, of disintegrating the higher moral faculties, if allowed to envelope the growing child. For lack of a more specific name it may be called parental over-solicitousness.

It is the way the past generation has brought up its children spiritually and materially, and the way the present generation is bringing up its own that is responsible for our personal and national infantilism. The care that wealthy parents expend upon their children is love's labor lost. Parents and teachers pay as little attention to their children's emotional development as they do to their vocalization or their carriage—that is, none at all. Then they are astonished that their children do not realize that "beauty is truth, truth beauty," and that they do not speak melodiously or walk gracefully.

There is only one way to facilitate emotional maturity: provide the adolescent with cares and responsibilities. On the other hand, there are many ways to facilitate emotional immaturity, and the most effective is to wrap the budding emotional soul in the cotton-wool of paternal-oversolicitude.

One of the reasons this country had a Washington and a Lee, a Franklin and a Lincoln, an Emerson and a Thoreau, a Poe and a Whitman, a Vanderbilt and a Vail is that they were not brought up in hothouses; they were not swaddled in silks and furs. Their colds did not cause parent-panics, and their bilious attacks were not beyond the reach of sulphur and molasses. They were not rushed to the mountains or the sea when the sun grew hot, or to Florida when the days grew cold. They were allowed to meet the hazards of life, and made to rely in a measure on their own invention to surmount them. They had to face the problems which God or man, fate or accident set them. But to-day we solve them for our children, and then we

wonder or weep when our children cannot solve those problems which present themselves after they have flown from the nest, or are making ready to fly.

While we witness the abolition of social distinctions the world over, and vaunt our democratic disregard of birth and privilege, we say to our son or daughter, "Don't play with so and so, dear, he is not 'nice'." Or we say to each other, "You know, Julia and Charles can't live in Sandown; their children have no one to associate with. Their neighbors are all Poles and chauffeurs."

We display an anxiety about the physical welfare of our children which would be justified were they made of sugar, salt, or tobacco. We shelter them until their twelfth year from all outside influences that we can thwart, and even then we strive to keep their contact with the world very limited. During this plastic age they are studiously kept from contacts, environment, and experience that would stimulate their emotional growth and invigorate it. Then we are astonished that many of them are punies, parasites, perverts. If parents lack vision and perspective, how can we expect children to possess qualities that must be bred into them unconsciously with the first smile and the first frown?

IV

There is an appalling side of matrimony which is disturbing the minds of many people: the increasing frequency of divorce in this country. More divorces spring from Adult-infantilism than from adultery. When a man realizes that his wife is a doll, with the reactions of a child in the body of a woman, he quickly curls himself up into a cocoon or he seeks the companionship of someone who will give him emotional stimulation or appeasement. It is the same with a woman who has had it brought home to her that her husband is a "stuffed shirt," who whistles tunelessly while shaving, blows soap-bubbles while bathing, becomes panicky when his temperature rises above one hundred and two, and won't play unless he can be the leader. Jealousy, cruelty, alcoholism are as naught compared with Adult-infantilism as a wrecker of marriage.

In young women Adult-infantilism takes on an attractive aspect and appeals to man's sense of protection. The girl whose lisp is "too cute for words," who plays at being a child when she is old enough to have one of her own, who looks appealingly to men for assistance and comfort is the one from whom men should fly as they would from the plague. But they don't. The woman-infant attracts them. They rail and theorize against the girl who is not afraid to look after herself, who has neither leisure nor inclination to camouflage her personality that it may please the other sex, and who scorns artifices of conduct as much as she loathes affectation.

"My daughter, you know, is such a child," is the customary admonition of the mother to her new son-in-law, or it was until yesterday, and that's the pity of it! The speech I heard oftenest from women during my professional life was, "You see, I knew very little about life, its entailments and responsibilities, when I married. My mother did not tell me anything."

The adult-infant woman who marries may experience when her first child is born a far greater thrill than she had when she received her first doll, but apparently she soon finds the responsibility too great, the care too confining, the energy required to bring him up more than she can supply; and the child is given over to nurses. It is beyond belief how little parents see of their children these days. Of course I mean parents that are well-to-do. Parents who think they can buy character for their children from nurses and teachers harbor a delusion from which flows the unpardonable sin: bringing children into the world and then neglecting to orient them on the roadway of life.

It is obvious that the life of a nation

is dependent exclusively on the lives of the individuals who compose it, so the handicaps of the latter are directly resultant from those of the former. An individual carries his infirmities and qualities into his public life—and the public life of some hundred and fifteen million people compose these United States as a nation. Therefore, it is not astonishing that the man who suffers pain because his house is not so large as his neighbor's should belong to a nation which becomes much wrought up when it discovers that it cannot have the largest airship in the world, or which prides itself on having the biggest city, the tallest buildings, the longest bridges, and the fastest automobiles in the world. Dimension, size, weight, and speed are the slogans of our country, and they compensate for ideals, for art, for true greatness.

We display, to the average European, an ignorance or an apathy toward foreign affairs which is astounding. Magazines or books that attempt to cope with this apathy are regarded as "highbrow," and receive neither support nor encouragement. Stray facts regarding foreign policies, like facts about foreign customs, are gathered from newspapers and from persons who are not qualified either by experience or knowledge to speak informatively.

One reads, in the newspapers, at intervals, that a man whose name is prominent in business circles has just returned from a trip to Europe. He is eagerly questioned by reporters as to "conditions abroad," and there usually follows, on the part of the traveler, a long, detailed, forceful, and sometimes plausible argument which tends to explain not only facts regarding other countries, but their hidden and mysterious psychologies. Not a voice is raised in protest as to the wrongness of such argument; the public either shrugs its shoulders, thinking, "What do I care? These foreigners should take care of their own affairs, just as we, good Americans, take care of ours," or else accepts it all blindly.

It is only occasionally that politics have any meaning save "to keep the newspapers busy" and "to provide jobs for a lot of men who could not otherwise make a living." The fact that politicians are running our nation and that upon them falls the responsibility of shaping its destiny, makes little or no impression. To follow the trend and achievements of the country requires maturity of mind which involves emotional maturity. That is what we have not got; the happy-go-lucky attitude is so much easier. We would rather play golf or go to a football game than vote; and we cannot take the time from radios and movies to inquire into the merit of constitutional amendments. It is always time enough to rise up in self-defense when our statesmen strike at our most cherished possession. We, moral men and true, find it much easier flagrantly to break the law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of alcohol than we do to co-operate in getting it changed or modified so that we, moral men and true, can face ourselves as such in the mirror.

Youth is dogmatic and tenacious of its opinions. It takes years of experience, of hard knocks and sound thinking to reach the conclusion that there is some good in all evil and some evil in every good. To children things, ideas, and persons are all of one piece: good or bad. Tolerance is a virtue to which they have no access, and their opinions have the rigidity and stubbornness of the inexperienced. It is only in later years that resiliency of mind and indulgence of heart modify the sternness of our youthful judgments. Can we say that we have reached maturity when we reflect upon our attitude toward Negroes, Jews, and Irish Catholics? What is the explanation of our hatred of them? It does not exist among other peoples. In what country of the world could the Ku Klux Klan thrive and operate as it does in the United States? Can anyone imagine such excitement and participation in fundamentalism in France or in England as we have displayed during the

past year? We have two political parties: the members of one oppose the other, but neither can tell wherein they differ. A Republican is a man who believes in a protective tariff, but when the Democrats are in power the protective tariff still prevails. Our political views, as well as our religious beliefs, are for the most part emotional attitudes. Judgment does not enter into their conclusions, it leaves the road free to prejudice and to what we call tradition—that is, to our father's ideas and beliefs.

What does a child do when he has nothing to do or nothing to play with? If he is very young, he cries to attract attention or to manifest his boredom. If he is older, he clamors for help; if he is too old to do either, he sits in an armchair and broods, his feet dangling over one of the arms, or he seeks solace in drink or drugs. When questioned, he says, "I have nothing to do, no one to play with, I am tired of my old toys and books; I have nowhere to go." What do we grown-ups do when we have amassed a competence, are bored with the newspapers, and cannot find any new movies? We go to Europe by the tens of thousands, we rush *en masse* to join touring parties, we are forever carrying our sterile minds and tired bodies to other lands. We exclaim "How lovely!" as our gondolas glide through the Grand Canal; "how queer!" when we look at the habitués of the Café de la Rotonde, "how terrible!" when we listen to the guide's toneless explanations of the Tower of London, and we hope it won't be long before we are back in Claridge's, in Montmartre, or at the Lido.

One of the most conspicuous traits common to all the examples chosen in order to illustrate the extent to which we are adult-infants is that there is everywhere a lack of moderation, of measure. We take things in their extreme, we push a situation to the point where it can no longer hold but has to give way under the pressure we inflict upon it. We drink to excess, or we are total abstainers; we talk continuously, or we are mute; we are ardent churchgoers, or we maintain that religion has lost contact with the living reality from which it derives validity and truth. We play too hard, and we work too hard; we condemn others, or we praise them beyond their merit. We contend that the countries of Europe should pay us what they owe us in full, or that we should wipe the debts completely off the slate. People are "hateful" or "wonderful," and things are "terrible" or "marvellous." There is no middle-ground where good and evil mingle and blend, and make for thought and perspective. We are a nation of people whose emotional qualities are not measured against corresponding intellectual possessions and we display the former to the detriment of the latter. It was not always so; it is a comparatively recent development. It is a corroding result of our colossal and too easily won prosperity. What if we should have to distribute our money that we may rid ourselves of this recently acquired infirmity?

The die is cast, but we need not despair. Recognition and detection of the causes of a malady are half the cure. Materially, we have made great strides in the past hundred years; we have reached a position in the financial world of which we may be proud. But we may have more legitimate cause for pride when other nations no longer regard us as a conglomeration of business wizards, unbeatable polo-players, peerless cup-defenders, whose days are given over to making money and whose nights are devoted to listening to the American eagle shriek our praises.

SYLVIA GOES TO THE CITY

A STORY

BY PHILIP CURTISS

IT HAD been agreed for months that Sylvia deserved her trip to the city, but now that we stood side by side on the station platform we both began to get a little teary about it. For one thing, she looked so dashed handsome, there in her traveling clothes. That bunch of violets, for instance—that veil and that English luggage—I could see every man in the chair car perk up his head the moment she entered.

Beside her I began to feel dowdy and ill at ease in my soiled tweeds and run-over golf shoes. That noon, I realized, she would lunch with her sister at the St. Romulus, where she would be surrounded by palms and jazz music and sleek city men in double-breasted blue serge. How far away, then, would seem her memories of me and the vegetable man and the West Gosset Hose Company, which stood in plain sight from the station platform. My mind ran to the fly papers hanging under our dining-room mantel. Perhaps in honest loyalty Sylvia would give only the *faintest* shudder when she thought of her home; but just the same she would see the drab tragedy of it all.

Possibly the same thoughts, only too poignantly, were occurring to Sylvia herself, for in sudden loyalty she put her hand on my arm.

"Sweetheart," she begged, "I feel like an awful pig, taking this orgy of pleasure when you are left all alone up here in the country."

Nevertheless, her eyes began to grow distant as she argued briskly, "At the same time I really do feel that I owe this trip not merely to myself but equally to you. No man likes to see his wife grow dull and provincial. And Connie has been such a dear! It is only two days and one night, but we are planning to jam every minute with the opera and two matinées. We'll have a dinner and a couple of luncheons at the St. Romulus or one of those new places and after the opera Connie is going to give a late supper party at the 'Sabot d'Or.' Connie goes with a rather swift crowd, I'm afraid, but it's always amusing."

"I'm sure it will be," I agreed dully.

"I've left the corn flakes," murmured Sylvia, "right in plain sight on the kitchen table. And the milk will be in the usual place."

"Thanks, Darling," I choked.

We both stirred sharply as the engine whistled for the crossing. The porter descended with his little footstool and Sylvia climbed the steps. She gave a final wave from the vestibule, and the train pulled out. I turned back to pick up the threads of my empty life.

I was just crossing the platform when suddenly the door of the telegraph office burst open and out came Rennie Hamstraw, his hands full of yellow envelopes.

"Well of all the luck!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

My answer seemed, at the moment, candid, straightforward, and harmless, but it had scarcely passed my lips before I knew that it was one of those things that should have been left unsaid.

"I've just been seeing Sylvia off," I told him. "She's gone to New York for a couple of days—to see life."

"Excellent!" roared Rennie. "You're just the man I want. Come on out and stay with me."

I hesitated for a moment, purely on moral grounds. It was not that I should not have a good time at Rennie's but, having sent Sylvia away for her toning up in the city, it seemed to be a spiritual part of the contract that I, by way of contrast, should stay alone and be miserable at home.

"Come on. We'll go get your things," urged Rennie and, seizing my arm, he led the way.

At our house I found that the kitchen stove had gone out, and there is nothing in the world more desolate than a cold kitchen; but on the table stood the package of corn flakes left by Sylvia's own hand. The sight of it made me feel unspeakably sentimental and at the same time unspeakably pious, yet I could not forget that I had a guest in the house. I fished out a demijohn from behind the flour barrel and went back to the library where I had left Rennie. He took the small glass that I poured him and raised it to his lips.

"Well, here's to the shrunken garrison!" he offered. He looked at his glass in sudden wonder. "Say! What is this?"

"It's applejack," I replied modestly. "I get it from a friend."

Rennie tapped his glass absently and I tilted the demijohn for a second time. In perfect silence we sat there for some moments and listened to the steady tick of the dining-room clock. It was curious, but I had never known before that that clock *had* a tick.

Rennie stirred a bit, then stood up and took off his motor coat and his hat. "Thanks, I will," he said. "No, don't bother about the water." He lighted a cigar and stretched out his legs. "Now this just proves," he mused comfortably, "that in the long run everything seems to come out for the best."

"Yes, doesn't it?" I agreed, for the truth was that I had begun to feel rather snug myself.

"When I saw you this morning," explained Rennie, "I was probably the maddest man in Berkfield county. I had everything arranged for a house-party of eight or ten people, but at daybreak I go to the station to get a telegram and instead of one wire I get seven —every man and woman of the whole blooming party had suddenly backed out."

"Hard luck!" I replied.

"No, it isn't hard luck," returned Rennie. "That's just what I'm beginning to grasp. What do I care for a lot of those yaps from New York and Long Island whom I never see except once or twice a year when I go down to eat their food and sleep in their beds or when they come up to eat mine—eat or sleep in mine?" he corrected punctiliously.

"Now sitting here happily—pleasantly —comfortably," he continued, "I begin to see that a man's real friends are just the intimate, everyday people he sees around him in his everyday life."

I looked at him suspiciously. "Rennie," I asked, "did you have any breakfast?"

He caught the innuendo in my question. "Why certainly I had some breakfast," he retorted. "A melon—and a whole lot of coffee—and most of an egg. Mac, don't upset me when I'm feeling so philosophical. Why do you say ugly things like that?"

"Oh, nothing. Nothing at all," I apologized. "I merely thought that this life-in-our-village stuff was rather new to your line."

"Well, perhaps it is new," admitted Rennie. He took another sip of his applejack. "But when a man reaches a certain age he begins to see things in a different light. For, answer me this, if you can. Who *are* a man's real friends except the people he sees the most of?"

Of course, I couldn't find any answer to that and, before Rennie gets any worse, I had better describe him as, up to that moment, his voice and appear-

ance had remained perfectly normal. It was only his words that had begun to get slightly cuckoo.

If you could see Reynolds Hamstraw on the streets of a city you would say that he probably edited some magazine of a strong moral trend, or perhaps that he was in charge of the public playgrounds. He is a big man but not in the least muscular. He has a high and benignant forehead, queer, scant curly hair, and he always wears gold-rimmed spectacles. He has a chauffeur who looks like a Levantine pirate and he drives around in an old French car that was certainly made not later than 1907. It looks more like a swan boat than a motor car.

So this is Rennie, but his place, to which he had just invited me, is entirely another matter. In fact, I have often wondered whether Mrs. Dallingham-Booth, the society novelist, wrote her novels after seeing Rennie's place or whether Rennie built his place after reading Mrs. Dallingham-Booth. At least I never saw such a place outside a romance. You drive through miles and miles of dense forest, owned mostly by Rennie, then suddenly bursts out before you the most incredible vista of lawns and flower beds and terraces and huge granite mansion. There are herds of saddle horses that nobody ever rides, fat cattle that never give any milk, tennis courts, bowling greens, Badminton nets, croquet parks, and thick ranks of English servants who must, I am sure, have been rehearsed personally by Cyril Maude or George Arliss.

"Now," said Rennie, "go on upstairs and pack your toothbrush."

I wavered a moment. "I think I ought to write Sylvia first."

"What for?" asked Rennie, in amazement. "If anything happens to you I'll send her a wire."

Just the same I insisted on sitting down at my desk.

"My own dearest Sylvia," I began. "You cannot believe how forlorn and bleak it is to come back to a cold, empty house. . . ."

I couldn't think of a great deal to say beyond that for, after all, I was still well and nothing much had happened around town. However, I managed to piece together a couple of good hearty pages, hoping that Sylvia was having the time of her life in New York and reminding her that, from our desolate hilltop, I was trying to picture her among the cafés and the fast life. From time to time as I worked I could hear Rennie rise very quietly and tiptoe to the table. There would be a soft gurgle and then he would sit down again. I finished my letter with a line of crosses and sealed it with a bang.

"Tally-ho!" exclaimed Rennie. "To horse and to hound!"

By the time, however, that I had gone upstairs and packed my little all, consisting of a dinner jacket and a couple of dress shirts, Rennie had had another idea.

"It seems a shame," he mused, as we stood by the front door, "to celebrate Old Home Week all by ourselves. Remember I was set for a houseparty and I can accommodate any number up to thirty-four. You know your West Gosset better than I do. Just run over the list of the nobility, the gentry, and the learned professions and see whom else we can bid to the Maying."

"Well," I suggested, "we might try Dayton Padgett."

"Done!" agreed Rennie. "I don't know the gentleman but he has a fine resonant name."

At my front gate the swan boat was still waiting and, as Rennie slipped slightly on the running board, the Levantine pirate gave me a quizzical look. Rennie made up for it by suddenly becoming very grand.

"Tuck us in well, Isaac," he commanded. "The air is tart. Mr. Gilmore will tell you where to go."

Dayton Padgett, our next recruit, lived entirely alone in an old square green house surrounded by dead apple trees. In the year 1848, I imagine, there

was no prouder name in all West Gosset than that of Padgett, for Date's ancestors had established a thread mill under the hill and had purchased mahogany furniture; but the thread mill had long since disappeared and the Padgetts of recent days had been thinkers rather than doers. Date himself, on a tiny income, had worked out a scheme of life that completely satisfied him. He spent twenty hours a day reading curious old books on the most amazing subjects, such as feudal tenures or cavalry discipline. Also, by a sort of ancestral heritage, he held the office of village magistrate. He had, perhaps, one case a month and for mounting the woolsack collected a fee of three dollars.

Indeed, as we approached the house we saw the rare sight of a state trooper leaving the gateway and Rennie groaned aloud.

"The place has been raided!"

"Not at all," I reassured him. "That's merely the come-and-go that always surrounds a public official. You see, Date Padgett occupies the same position in West Gosset that the chief justice occupies in Washington. You ought to see them change the guard at midnight. They tell me it's a very pretty sight."

I gave a loud knock on the spotty front door and after several minutes Date Padgett came out in a tattered blue dressing-gown. He is a hard-bitten, horsey-looking man of about thirty-nine and he had not yet shaved for the day, but otherwise he carried a curious dignity. Date has a dry wit of his own but he seldom smiles. Instead, he assumes a look of slow wonder.

"Date," I said, "this is Mr. Hamstraw. Mr. Hamstraw—Judge Padgett."

Rennie was in just the mood to respond to anything official. At that moment he would have saluted the dog warden.

"Judge," he announced, "I am pleased to meet you. We have come to ask you a little favor."

Date looked him over. "Accident?" he asked. "Or just plain speeding?"

"No, Date," I interjected, "this visit is purely social."

"Oh, in that case," replied Date, "come into the dining room. You'll have a chance to see the great man at breakfast."

In a huge, bare room, where the thread kings of West Gosset must once have sat at their port and pancakes, was a half-eaten plate of ham and eggs, badly shriveled around the edges. Date went to the sideboard and took out a blue bottle. I explained to Rennie:

"This is not, as you might suppose, a case of corruption in high circles. The judge makes wine under a permit and makes it consummately." I turned back to our host. "The best I could offer Mr. Hamstraw was applejack. I got it from a friend."

Date looked at me oddly. "Yes," he replied, "I know that friend. We've got him now under bonds of thirty-five hundred dollars."

"For shame!" exclaimed Rennie, suddenly, and, not knowing what else he might say, I plunged hurriedly into the reason for our visit.

"Date," I commanded, "we're in a hole and we want you to help us. You see, Mr. Hamstraw had a big gorgeous houseparty all made up for to-day. You know his place—it's called 'Englefern'—out by the mountain—hot and cold water in every room—billiards, ring toss, and everything. Well, this morning, our friend goes to the telegraph office and what does he find? Eight guests in succession had turned him down by wire."

"The lousy bums!" interjected Rennie. He suddenly leaned forward, pleading. "You understand, Judge, there's not a single thing the matter with my house. I'll leave it to Mac. Mac, do *you* know any reason why people should refuse my hospitality?"

"It seems to be a bad fix," commented Date, solemnly, "but just what is it you want me to do about it?"

"Good Heavens, did I forget that?" moaned Rennie. "Why, Judge, we

want you to be a guest! I might say *the* guest. I tell you what I'll do, Judge. Do you like squab?"

"Very much indeed," replied Date.

"And do you like to ride horseback?"

"When I get the opportunity."

"Very well, then," said Rennie, decisively. "Put him down for the blue room."

Date looked rather mournfully at the puckered remains of his dry ham and eggs. "It certainly sounds very attractive," he mused, "but the trouble is that an officer has just been here to tell me that this is going to be a sort of jubilee week on the highways. You see, at this time of year a lot of wealthy New-Yorkers are racing back and forth from their country places up to the north of here. They seem to think they can do as they like in these little rural towns, so orders have gone out to patrol the trunk lines and pull in all speeders."

"But even so," pursued Rennie, "you don't have to go out and trap these malefactors yourself. All you have to do is sit quietly in the blind and tap them behind the ears as the cops bring them in. They can always call you when they've made a bag."

"True," admitted Date, weakening. "I'll go over and see what the sergeant has to say."

The local barracks of the state constabulary was a little tin building at the edge of the town. Standing in front of it, as we rolled up in our majesty, were a large truck and three despondent-looking men. Date went inside, then came out and quietly nodded for me to follow. In the office he closed the door and confided:

"Look here. The troopers have just pinched a whole truck load of Canadian liquor."

"Well, for Heaven's sake," I begged, "don't tell Rennie. He'll invite the whole bunch to his houseparty—police and all."

"I won't," said Date, "but I'll have to stay here a few minutes. After that, the sergeant says it's all right. If he gets any automobile cases he'll call me up out at Rennie's place."

While I sat quietly on the window sill the sergeant brought in a surly and sheepish man who owned the truck. Date asked him some questions, signed a few papers, and then we went out. As I took my seat in the tonneau of the swan boat, however, my feet seemed to touch something bigger and harder than my own kitbag. After we had left the village I lifted the rug.

"Rennie, what in the world have you got here?"

"So you've discovered it, have you?" chuckled Rennie. "It's treasure trove! A case of champagne and a case of cordials."

Our magistrate began to look alarmed. "Where did you get it? Out of that truck?"

"Where else did you think I got it?" retorted Rennie. "Out of the greengrocer's?"

"Do you mean to say they sold it to you?" demanded Date. "Right there in front of the police barracks?"

"They didn't sell it to me," replied Rennie. "They *gave* it to me. They said there would be just that much less evidence. They'd have given me the whole truck load if I could have taken it away."

"Well, I'll be damned," remarked Date.

All the way out to Rennie's place the judge became increasingly sober in one sense of the word and Rennie became increasingly so in the other. Indeed, in all the tons of literature on the subject of alcoholism I have found no mention of one very curious fact—no man ever gets highly blotto on his own property. It is always in other people's front parlors that one gets struck with the amusing idea of standing the hat rack on the grand piano.

In short, our first luncheon at Englefern was sedate and commonplace almost to the point of priggishness. You might have thought that we were three men of affairs who had met to raise funds for a

school of art. The late autumn afternoon was mild and dreamy, so Rennie put on canvas gloves and a pair of pruning shears and went all over the lawn clipping twigs off the shrubbery. When he does that he thinks he is gardening. Date Padgett buried himself in a book called, *Seven Years Among the Moslems*, while I found a *chaise longue* on the south piazza where I could stretch out in the sun and think of Sylvia and what a good time she must be having.

It was only after the lights had come on and we had gone up solemnly to dress for dinner that we began to admit that something was lacking, that our party, in short, was tottering toward anti-climax. It was Rennie himself who brought up the subject as we were standing politely in the smoking room, waiting for the silver shaker.

"Do you suppose," he asked, thoughtfully, "that what we unconsciously miss is the feminine element? I hate to believe it, for I have always maintained that sheer intellect could amuse itself in the most impossible situations."

He had hardly spoken the words when the butler appeared to say, "Telephone, sir," and Rennie raised his hands.

"Fate," he exclaimed, "has heard our cry!"

The butler, however, speedily dashed his hopes. "It is Judge Padgett, sir, who is wanted by the police barracks."

When Date came back his look was morose. "A terrible nuisance," he announced. "They've caught the first of the speeders. Don't wait with dinner. I'll slip into town, pick up a bite there, and come back during the evening."

"But look here, Judge," demanded Rennie. "Do you have to wait like a lackey on these evildoers? Tell your officers to throw them into the dungeon and beat them with lashes. When you've finished your dinner in peace and comfort you'll hear what they have to say."

Date laughed apologetically. "You see this is not exactly a criminal matter. It is merely a party from Lenox whose chauffeur had failed to carry his car license. They're bound for New York and naturally want to push along."

"In the eyes of the law," insisted Rennie, "their guilt is just as black as that of those poor misguided bootleggers. We can't draw social distinctions in our criminal code. That's what caused the French Revolution."

"Well, there's only one thing I can do," replied Date, slowly. "As long as I try them inside the township it doesn't matter where I do it. If you want to have them out here—"

"Marvelous!" exclaimed Rennie. "What kind of people are they?"

"The sergeant *said*," replied Date, "two gentlemen and three ladies. Of course, those terms are used very laxly."

"Two gentlemen and three ladies," mused Rennie. "We could cut off the hands of the gentlemen and lock up the ladies until they grew reasonable." He suddenly came out of his romantic dreams. "All right, Judge, tell your minions to bring them out here. If they don't want to come then let them wait in the common gaol. I'll go and put off dinner until we've cleaned up this nasty mess."

When Date came back from the telephone he was still doubtful but Rennie was all fire and energy.

"I was in court, once," he announced, "with a friend, getting alimony, so I know just what to do. I think the best place to hold this tribunal will be in the ballroom."

He led the way to the end of the hall and switched on the lights of a tremendous great place that occupied the whole of one wing. Although it was called the ballroom, it really looked more like the Smithsonian Institution, for some past member of the Hamstraw family must either have been a mighty hunter in Africa or else in the fur business. The walls were crowded with stuffed heads of antelopes, gazeboks, and gnus. On the floor were huge bearskins, brown and polar, and at one end of the room was a sort of carved dais, for the musicians.

At both sides of this stood suits of mail, like sentinels, and on the wall above it were clusters of barbaric arms.

Rennie seized a huge, thronelike chair and lifted it to the dais. Then he draped a leopard skin over the rail.

"For you, Judge," he announced with a bow. "Doesn't that look regal? You could try Catiline with *that* outfit."

While waiting for our cutthroats, as we had already begun to call the poor unsuspecting motorists, we sat about, all of a flutter. It was not long before we heard a car on the drive. The butler drew open the doors and ushered in a most amazing procession. First came a state trooper escorting a fat, foreign-looking man with a fur coat and wild eyes. Behind them walked an iron-gray, handsome man of the banker type and behind him, in turn, a middle-aged woman and two younger ones, done up to their chins in motor coats.

To Rennie's disappointment, Date Padgett quietly ignored the leopardskin throne. He drew up a card table and the trooper handed him some papers. Date looked up at the wild-eyed man, who was obviously the prisoner.

"What is your name?"

The victim spat it out. "My name iss Anton Letchitski."

"And what is your occupation?"

"I am an opera singer."

From the side lines Rennie started up in huge interest but Date, the born jurist, never turned a hair. He began to read in a bored, singsong voice:

"Anton Letchitski, it is charged that at the town of West Gosset in the county of Berkfield . . . with force and arms you did then and there permit the operation of a motor vehicle, to wit a limousine . . . without carrying thereon the proper certificate of registration, all of which is against the peace, of evil example and contrary to the form of the statute in such case made and provided. To this what is your plea, guilty or not guilty?"

The prisoner fought it out with himself and then answered, "Kilty!"

From the background one of the young women snickered and the trooper glared at her but Date took up his pencil with the true weariness of the night-court judge.

"One dollar and costs," he murmured.

There came an unexpected silence for, like Rennie and me, the tourists had evidently supposed that the trial would last for two or three hours. Then abruptly the banker-looking man pushed his way to the table and threw down a ten-dollar bill. As the judge began to fish nickels and dimes from the pockets of his dress trousers Rennie addressed the culprits.

"And now," he asked politely, "being purged of your sin, won't you all stay for dinner?"

The banker man looked at him in amazement, then laughed. "That's very kind of you, but we really must be pushing on for New York."

From the table Date Padgett looked up. "But how can you?" he asked.

The banker man stopped short, with his pocket book in the air.

"What do you mean?"

"You haven't a license certificate any more than you had before," Date explained. "You'll only be caught a half-dozen times between here and the state border. Every car on the road is being stopped to-night to check up on these little things."

Around us in a circle had gathered the tourists with expressions which varied from high indignation on the part of the opera singer to frank amusement on the part of the younger women.

"But, Judge—Your Honor," argued the banker man, "can't you give us a paper saying that we've been caught already and have paid up?"

"I can't give you permission to break the law twice, just because you've broken it once," answered Date soundly. "You can hire another car if you want or you can go by train, but your own car cannot be moved until you can show a certificate to match your number plates."

"And think of the dinner!" begged

Rennie. "I went out and ordered for eight just as soon as I heard you'd been pinched. At least don't you want to go out and see what we've got?"

The banker man looked searchingly at Rennie for a moment and then a light came into his face.

"Aren't you Mr. Hamstraw," he asked, "of the Van Winkle Club?"

"Yes, and you're Mr. Buckmaster," replied Rennie promptly. "I could tell that eye in a million." Seizing instantly on his advantage, he began to bustle around officially. "Come on, people, you're up against the finest legal mind in West Gosset and it's no use trying to argue with the law. We're not at all fussy, but if you *do* care to dress I'll have your luggage sent up to your rooms."

There was, of course, more argument than that, but on the point of law Date was adamant. So was the trooper who left presently for his post. A visit to the smoking room helped to melt down resistance, and within a few minutes a long train of menservants was bearing luggage from the visitors' car to the upper stories. In the meantime, Date, Rennie, and I found ourselves back in the smoking room, where Rennie looked at his watch.

"I wonder who we'll get next," he mused gleefully. "It'll be too late to ask 'em to dinner, but at least we can have them in for coffee and cigars."

"But isn't it about time," I suggested, "to find out who these people are?"

"Oh, I've found out already," replied Rennie, casually. "In fact I had a suspicion of all except Letchitski as soon as I saw them. I've been hearing about them in Lenox all the fall. Buckmaster is a bond man of some sort down in New York and a very smart chap but he has a weakness for celebrity hunting. The older woman is his wife. The dark girl is Agnes Lontaine, the musical comedy actress, and the quiet little blonde is that Mrs. Cassidy who was mentioned in Willie Astleigh's divorce."

Date Padgett stared at him dumbly. "And yet you want more!"

A rustling and giggling on the stairs cut off all further surmise. The next moment the smoking room seemed to be filled up with evening gowns—and such evening gowns as I had never seen in my life. But then I had never been to The Follies. At dinner I sat between Mrs. Cassidy and Date while at the other side of the table Rennie beamed between Mrs. Buckmaster and the actress. As for Letchitski, he still seemed at first to be slightly huffish, but when the champagne came on, fresh from the police barracks, he began to unbend. Like all great artists, he seemed to be sunshine and shadow, that man, for when six kinds of Rennie's new cordials were offered after the coffee he leaped to his feet.

"Laties and shentlemen," he announced, "in my kuntry, in dee olten days, ven a poor minstrel come to dee castle of a crate nobleman he vas always obligt to sink for his supper. I vill sink to you now."

With one hand in his hair he led the way to the ballroom and, as he opened the grand piano, Mrs. Buckmaster said pleadingly, "Oh, Tony, something from Wagner."

"Wagner notings!" retorted the virtuoso. "I vill sink a ballat of my own composition vich means in Inklish, 'Vy does a lady lion scratch? Dee fleas do hurt her so.'"

He sounded the keys and the room was filled with a riot and soaring of chords which, for all I knew, might really have been the overture to "Siegfried." Then suddenly the performer stopped.

"Dis," he explained, "is dee lady lion's *motif*," and he rumbled out a passage with his left hand. "And dis," he said, "is dee flea *motif*," and he made a funny, crinkling sound on the highest of the upper keys. "All reaty, now. We're off:

"'*Ib slish vy schlunter kiebst in schloss*—'"

Not one of us, of course, understood a word of the Polish or Hungarian or whatever it was, but after a minute we were simply rocking, for in that marvelous

jumble of low-comedy piano and grand-opera voice you could simply see the poor moth-eaten old lion getting crosser and crosser until she cried, with the little flea hopping all over her back. At the end Letchitski stood up and took a curtain call, once as performer and once as the author. Then Agnes Lontaine gave an imaginary imitation of Walter Hampden singing a coon song, "Ha! Ha!" and next Letchitski was persuaded to sing some real Wagner. In the middle of the second number I felt a tug at my coat and Mrs. Cassidy, my dinner partner, was whispering beside me:

"Do you realize that there is a glorious moon outside? Let's slip away and go out and look at it?"

I found a greatcoat for her and one for myself and the minute we reached the terrace she slipped her fingers into mine.

"Mr. Gilmore," she said, "you don't believe all you hear about me, do you?"

I assured her that I had heard nothing except the most spotless reports, so we found a marble bench and sat down.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked quietly, as we remained silent in the moonlight.

I laughed. "I am thinking how beautiful it is to be here in the country where life is so simple and homelike and pure."

"Yes, isn't it," sighed Mrs. Cassidy, as she snuggled closer and rested her cheek on my shoulder. "You've no idea how hard it is for any woman to keep a clear head in town." A hand came up and began to pat the lapel of my greatcoat. "Tell me. Have you ever read *The Green Hat*?"

It may have been half an hour later when suddenly, from the ballroom, we heard roars of laughter and then a dull thud that shook the glass doors. In a moment Rennie came out on the terrace, calling for me.

"Hey, Mac! Come in here. We want you. Miss Lontaine has promised to turn a handspring if Letchitski will stand on his head. Everyone else has got money up on it, so we want you to be starter and judge."

Eagerly enough we both hastened in, but that promised contest was never to be held. For I had just cleared the arena, introduced the contestants, and held up my watch when suddenly Date Padgett stopped us all.

"Wait a minute! What's that?"

Outside, in the park, coming nearer and nearer, we heard the pop of an engine and, going to the windows, saw a trooper on a motorcycle racing up to the door.

"Hello!" exclaimed Rennie, with interest, "I wonder who he's got now."

As the servants had long since gone to bed, he himself went to the door and came back followed by the officer. The rest of us had made hurried attempts to straighten the rugs and Date Padgett walked forward.

"Well, Officer, this is pretty late for our business. Somebody hurt?"

The trooper grinned. "No, sir, I've got a message for Mr. Gilmore. We tried to telephone but no one would answer." He turned to me. "Your wife, sir, has been calling you ever since noon from New York. When nobody answered from your house at midnight she called the police barracks to find out whether you had been run over or drowned."

Drooping and repentant, I went upstairs to put in a call for New York while the others went laughing to bed. By this time Sylvia had, of course, been reassured by the police, so when at last I got her at Connie's apartment, she was merely sleepy—but very upstage.

The next morning the prisoners of war left just before lunch. By telegraphing the chief commissioner, Date had secured them some sort of permit which allowed them safe conduct to the state line. The garrison was reduced again to a peacetime status and thus, strolling pensively among the falling leaves of Rennie's autumnal gardens, I had the whole afternoon in which to work out a story that would be harmless, plausible, and at the same time essentially true.

By five o'clock I had it letter perfect, but I needn't have worried, for when I met the late evening train Sylvia literally threw herself into my arms. As we crossed the platform together she sniffed the cool mountain air.

"Oh, Darling," she exclaimed, "isn't this clean and restful? I don't think you appreciate the country until you have been away from it as I have."

I agreed with her entirely as I tucked the laprobe around her knees and the car started.

"Well," I suggested cheerily, "how's little old New York?"

Sylvia shrugged in the darkness. "Oh, so-so. Of course I had a good time—in a way, but it wasn't just what I thought. For one thing I had hoped to hear that new tenor—Letchitski—at the opera but he wasn't singing last night."

"Not at the opera," I corrected her.

"Then yesterday afternoon," continued Sylvia, regardless, "we went to see Hilda Ray in 'Tricky' but she was sort of lifeless. Connie says she is far from the best."

"Yes," I agreed idly, "I've heard that Agnes Lontaine is the dancer you ought to see."

Those two I could tell about freely during the evening. Only Mrs. Cassidy need be reserved for the long winter nights. By this time we had reached home where I had, I admit, been fixing things up with more than my usual zeal for housework. The kitchen stove was snapping merrily, a little supper was laid in the dining room, and two open fires were going in the front of the house. Sylvia, like the little corker she is, responded instantly and went about praising everything in sight. As she toasted one toe on the library andiron she kissed me again, then burst out suddenly:

"Oh, I wouldn't live for anything the kind of life that people live in the cities. It seems to me so coarse—and loud."

"So I imagine," I answered guardedly.

"But you, you wretched beast," broke in Sylvia, "I thought you were going to write!"

"I did write—" I had almost said it, but just at that moment I saw something that froze the words in my throat. In plain sight on my desk at the other side of the room was a large, white, square envelope, addressed, stamped, and ready to be mailed. It had been there all the time since Rennie had sent me up to pack, and now to my guilty eyes it looked as big as a poster. With a sort of languid "Heigh-ho," I sauntered carelessly over and slipped the envelope into my pocket. When Sylvia had gone up to take off her traveling clothes, I hastily opened it.

"My own dearest Sylvia: You cannot believe how forlorn and bleak it is to come back to a cold, empty house . . ."

No, that was too much. Not even as a joke must Sylvia ever see that. I dropped it into the hottest part of the fire, then carefully poked it with the tongs to make sure that every scrap of it burned. Upstairs I could hear Sylvia bustling around gayly and presently she came down with a song on her lips.

But as she hesitated in the pleasant home firelight I could see that she had something on her mind. When I pressed her for it she blushed prettily and then she said:

"I wonder—you know that applejack—is there any of it left?"

"There certainly is," I replied heartily, and as I came back with the glasses Sylvia looked up with a smile.

"You know," she confessed, "I think that was part of my trouble down in New York. It made me feel sort of out of things—like a stranger among the rest."

"What did? What do you mean?" I asked her.

"Well you see," said Sylvia, "I may be old-fashioned and I may be fussy, but I couldn't *make* myself drink the sort of stuff they give you in town."

THE CRISIS IN AMERICAN LAW

BY ROSCOE POUND

Dean of the Harvard Law School

NO THOUGHTFUL observer may doubt that American legal and judicial institutions just now are subject to a severe strain. Nor may he deny that they are far from meeting the strain as we could wish. On the criminal side, in our large cities, the courts cannot cope with the continually growing volume of prosecutions. The prosecuting machinery is choked with cases of which it can make no other disposition than to dismiss them wholesale. But, in the meantime, the creation of new legal precepts, to be enforced by prosecution before the courts, goes forward steadily.

The administrative enforcing authorities deliver to the judicial machine scores of violators of those precepts, whom the courts are called on to try and to subject to penal treatment, but of whom only a small fraction can actually be disposed of with the apparatus at hand. Likewise on the civil side of the courts, in almost every city of importance, the trial calendars are in a chronic state of arrears. Even where the civil side of the courts moves with dispatch, business men have reasonable and strongly felt grievances. Too often the rules and doctrines by which business situations and business transactions are scrutinized and judged are narrow and based upon ideas and methods of the past. Too often there are no certainly applicable rules or doctrines by which one may prophesy with assurance that they will be judged. When there are rules, and the rules are well adapted to the business situation, the machinery of ascertaining the facts is often better adapted to trying a horse trade between two farmers of half a century ago than to judging the business and industrial controversies of to-day.

About twenty-five years ago we began to take subjects of controversy away from courts and confide them to administrative boards and commissions. But some of these, in effect, have become courts. The justice they administer is going the way of judicial justice. Others have made little progress in developing a technic of individualized application of law, so that their offhand executive justice has proved as unsatisfactory in one direction as slow-moving judicial justice in the other direction. At present there is a reaction against further extension of the former, without any clear program for improvement of the latter.

II

We shall be able better to understand the present condition of justice in the United States if we note that it is not without a parallel in our history. Much the same condition existed in the beginnings of our polity, at the end of the eighteenth and in the first decades of the nineteenth century. True, the situation after the Revolution was complicated by hostility to English law—the law we had inherited and the only law available for our purposes. It could not escape the odium of its English origin. Many who, in the spirit of the rationalism of the eighteenth century, believed that a new and complete body of law could be drawn up overnight by a sheer effort of reason, called for an American code.

Others would have received the then newly codified law of France. But the features of the unpopularity of courts and law and lawyers which prevailed in the early part of the last century that have meaning for us to-day are those which are connected with the then condition and organization of the courts, the then condition of Anglo-American judicial procedure, the then condition of English substantive law, and the organization and training of the lawyers of that time.

Until well into the eighteenth century, and in some colonies until, and for some time after, the Revolution, justice had been executive and legislative rather than judicial. The first American law books were books of practice before magistrates. The social and economic conditions of the colonies in the seventeenth century did not call for much law in the lawyer's sense. An offhand, common-sense administration of justice by magistrates, with appeal to legislative assemblies, sufficed. With the growth of the colonies, the rise of commerce, and the development of a more complex social and economic order, judicial justice came to be demanded. By the time of the Revolution, many colonies had courts manned in part, at least, by trained lawyers. But legislative justice did not die till after half of the nineteenth century was past, and at the opening of the century state courts were still largely manned by lay judges. Moreover, memories of the arbitrary action of royal judges in more than one colony, and imitation of their methods by some trained judges after the Revolution, fostered suspicion of lawyer-manned courts —the only kind of courts in which the economic order has any real security. When we add that the judicial organization of the time was modeled on the English judicial organization when at its worst, and imposed a centralized administration of justice on sparsely settled communities in a land of magnificent distances, in a time of slow and inadequate means of transportation, it is not hard to understand the distrust of courts and reliance upon legislation which has been a feature of our polity ever since.

Not only were the colonial judicial organization and colonial policy as to the personnel of tribunals ill adapted to American conditions after the Revolution, but the procedure of the courts—and at that time procedure was the bulk of the legal system—was ill suited to a new and growing country, with its common law yet to shape and with institutions for training lawyers yet to be set up. The eighteenth century was a period of formal over-refinement. It was an age in which soldiers went into the field dressed for the ballroom. It was an age of formal, ceremonious, involved military evolutions, in which a detachment sent as a reinforcement at a time of acute peril could gravely explain that they came on the field too late because, owing to bad roads and underbrush, it was necessary to halt ten times in an hour to dress ranks. In such a time, judicial procedure, like every other human activity, became highly formal, artificial, and dilatory. There were some simplifications in colonial times, to suit the ruder, frontier conditions of the New World. But the same pressure of economic development that led to lawyer-manned courts and judicial justice made for a reception of English law; and that brought with it eighteenth-century legal procedure. That procedure was far from adapted to the needs of early nineteenth-century America. It was no small factor in causing the general discontent with the administration of justice which prevailed a century ago.

Nor was the substance of the English law, which we inherited at colonization or received after the Revolution, better adapted to the time and place than the court-organization and legal procedure which were to provide enforcing machinery. The bulk of English substantive law at that time was the feudal land law. Commercial law was still formative. The law of contracts, in our modern sense, was yet to come. The

law of private wrongs, in the modern sense, was still far in the future. The law of business associations was in its crude beginnings. It was needful that our courts examine the traditional English law item by item in order to determine what was applicable to the social, economic, political, and geographical conditions of America, and reshape the received items thereto. This process required about seventy-five years. At the beginning of the process, in the earlier decades of the nineteenth century, the administration of justice was far from satisfactory.

Means of bettering American justice were not immediately at hand. The legislature was at hand, zealous as ever to enact paper remedies. But study of the problems, study of the legal materials, law books, trained judges and trained lawyers were the agencies through which improvement finally came; and all these had to be provided. Before the Revolution a few lawyers had gone to England for a legal education. But trained lawyers were few. Reported decisions of American courts were very few. American law books or American editions of English law books were wanting. Lawyers served an apprenticeship with a practitioner and then went forth to practice as if they had learned a trade. The scarcity of competent lawyers to carry on the work of justice in the everyday tribunals added to the causes of dissatisfaction with the courts and the law.

III

Looking back at the difficulties of American judicial administration at the outset of our polity, it will be seen that they were difficulties incident to a period of transition. The very English law that we inherited was under strain at home; for England was in transition from an agricultural-commercial to an industrial society. In the United States this body of law and of legal institutions came to a pioneer society in which there was a rapid economic development along with successive settlement of new areas and setting up of new commonwealths, each with its own legal institutions.

Yet our law and our legal institutions survived the transition, and in a relatively short time adapted themselves to the pioneer, rural, agricultural society of nineteenth-century America. The judicial organization was made over, and an American system of courts grew up which still prevails. By the middle of the century legal procedure had been overhauled and had become set in the lines that now prevail in this country. By the time of the Civil War the substantive law had been overhauled, partly by legislation, but chiefly by judicial empiricism, and had become in substance what it is now. Most important of all, a number of chairs had been founded in our universities, on the model of Blackstone's chair at Oxford, from one of which came Kent's *Commentaries*, one of the formative books of our law. Law schools had been founded. In one of these the endowment of the Dane professorship for Joseph Story resulted in a series of books on constitutional law, commercial law, and equity which were decisive in the development of an Anglo-American common law for the whole country. We had competent men studying law, competent judges, competent lawyers, and adequate law books. Thus the period that ends with the Civil War became the classical period of American law. It was the period of the great judges, of the great law books, of the great creative statutes that made or shaped the legal institutions and legal precepts with which we administer justice to-day.

IV

After a period of stability, extending from the middle of the last century to the present, a new era of dissatisfaction has set in. Once more our legal and judicial institutions are under fire—and justly so. And the reason is the same. We are in a period of transition, and our legal and judicial institutions, well

adapted to and functioning adequately in the society for which they were devised and in which they grew up, are ill adapted to and function badly, or at best indifferently, in the society in which they find themselves. The census of 1920 showed a definite shift of the center of gravity of our population from country to city. Moreover, this growth has been chiefly in the large cities, whereas in the nineteenth century growth took place chiefly by the opening up of new areas to settlement and the building up of new agricultural communities. When we observe that the population of New York City multiplied by forty-six in one hundred years, by six in fifty years, and almost by four in the last twenty years; that Chicago was nonexistent in 1820, and that its population has multiplied by nine in fifty years; that Cleveland, a village of less than one thousand inhabitants in 1820, had in 1920 a population of nearly 800,000, and had multiplied its population by more than eight in fifty years; that Detroit had multiplied its population by thirteen in fifty years, and by four in the last twenty years; and that Los Angeles had multiplied its population by one hundred in fifty years, and by almost six in the last twenty years, and had more than 576,000 inhabitants where there had been only a mission a century before—when we observe these things we may understand better the temporary breakdown of judicial justice in our large cities. A highly developed system of substantive law and a specialized machinery of prosecution, administration, judicial organization, legal procedure, and penal treatment, devised and shaped for pioneer, rural, agricultural America of the first half of the nineteenth century, are struggling with the wholly different conditions of the urban, industrial society of to-day. In the huge cities which have grown up all over the country in a generation the ill adaptation of the machinery to the task is acute.

In England, where a like situation existed in the nineteenth century, they overhauled the judicial organization completely in 1873. Thus far the staple American remedy has been to add judges or create more courts, while keeping up the essential features of a model designed for very different tasks, to be performed under different conditions, and for a much less volume of business. With respect to procedure, there has been much improvement in the past twenty-five years. But here also the method and presuppositions are those of a pioneer, rural, agricultural society, and a complete overhauling must come eventually, as it did in England. As to the administrative organization of the courts, it is everywhere in substance what we made it when we adapted the English models of the eighteenth century to the conditions of pioneer America. We have met the enormous increase of judicial business by multiplying officials, not by reorganizing the administrative side of our tribunals and inventing new methods suitable to the work they have to do to-day. It is true some of the municipal courts set up in the past two decades have worked out notable administrative improvements. But very little attention has been paid to this part of the machinery of the legal system. It is no more possible to conduct the business of the tribunals in the great city of to-day on the traditional lines of the old English courts, as modified in the early nineteenth century to meet the needs of that time, than to conduct the affairs of a modern industrial plant with the office methods of a century ago.

In the substantive law there has been steady growth. But growth by judicial decision, through experience of the operation of legal precepts in their application to litigated cases, is too halting to meet the needs of business in an era of rapid development of business methods. An acute critic has pointed out recently that courts are struggling vainly to treat problems arising from "sales agencies" by the legal conception of agency. Here the main difficulty is that it is no one's

business to study the law functionally, to perceive how and where it falls short, and why; to discover leaks in our apparatus of precepts and doctrines and find out how to stop them. Fifty years ago the judiciary committees of the houses of the legislature were equal to the small amount of investigation of this sort that was required for the efficient functioning of the law. Later committees on law reform in bar associations have been able to do part of this task. But to-day the task has become too great for these agencies. They are not continuously at work. They have no means of surveying the whole field. They can give but a fraction of their time. We must find some agency which is always in operation, which works under conditions of permanence, independence, and assured impartiality, in which, therefore, the public may repose confidence.

Not the least serious effect of the rapid growth of great urban areas and the transition to an urban industrial society is to be seen in the relation of the lawyer to the administration of justice. Our polity relies upon three checks to insure that the wide powers which we must confide to judges and prosecutors are not abused. One is the professional training of the judge. Another is scrutiny and criticism of all judicial proceedings by the bar. The third is publicity, insured by public records, showing fully what has been done, by whom, and upon what facts. Of these, on the whole, the second is the most effective. So much that goes on in courts is necessarily technical in character and can be understood in its true setting only by experts, that the press and the public must be ultimate rather than ordinary agencies for keeping the administration of justice in the right course. In the beginnings of our polity lawyers were few, were engaged primarily in the courts, and each knew what was done by the other and by the judge. To-day in our large cities the leaders of the profession seldom go into court and avoid all criminal cases. Professional defenders practice in criminal cases and the bar generally know little more of what goes on in criminal tribunals than the public at large. In rural communities the close daily contact of a small bar, chiefly or largely engaged in the courts, serves to preserve the conditions which our judicial and professional organization and our procedure presuppose. But in large cities the leader of the bar is a man of business. He advises, organizes, reorganizes, and directs business enterprises. The actual administration of justice in the courts is of secondary interest. Economic causes have turned the energies of the ablest and best trained in the profession into client-caretaking.

A century ago an unorganized profession could still preserve common law traditions through the close association of court room and circuit. In the large city of to-day there are thousands of lawyers, but there is no bar. There is no corporate profession with efficient apparatus for discipline and self-government. Thus the administration of justice is deprived of its best check. Not a little of what is worst in the administration of criminal justice in American cities is due to conditions that make Sampson Brass, and Dodson and Fogg, and Caleb Quirk, Esq., of Alibi House—who were eliminated in England by the incorporation of the lower branch of the profession—familiar characters in damage litigation and criminal prosecutions throughout the land.

V

What has been said is by no means a complete sketch of the effects of an era of transition upon a judicial organization and prosecuting machinery made for another time and another type of social and economic conditions. But it is not so important to indict our administration of justice as it is to see what is behind the details complained of, and thus perceive why things are as they are and how we may hope to make them better.

It is well to bear in mind, when English justice of to-day is compared with American justice, that the English have not been out of Egypt very long. Read Dickens on the Court of Chancery. Read Dickens on Bardell *v.* Pickwick. Read *Ten Thousand a Year*. They have in them much that is familiar to the observer of American law in action. But they are true pictures of English justice in a time not far in the past. From 1828 to 1873 law reform was a staple subject of agitation in British politics. Almost every administration during the period of legislative overhauling of legal institutions that came to an end in 1875 had its program of law reform. Successive royal commissions made detailed studies and elaborate reports. There was more than one unsatisfactory change before the present system was worked out.

With us the task is more complicated than it was in England. We have a double system of courts, state and federal. We cannot set up one system in all its details for all the courts of the land. Congress and the legislatures of forty-eight states will each provide to some extent in their own way for their respective jurisdictions. A judicial organization for Rhode Island would not do for Texas; nor could Massachusetts and California employ exactly the same judicial and administrative machinery. We must guard against the sort of thing that happened too often when our present system was in the making. Popular impatience at the over-conservatism of lawyers and the slow progress of adaptation of English law and English legal institutions to the new world, and legislative overconfidence, led to many off-hand changes or ill-advised inventions that vex our administration of justice to-day.

For example, consider the common law as to misdemeanors. It had grown up in the Court of Star Chamber. Hence it was an object of suspicion. It was invoked to preserve order in the disorders that went with the bad economic situation after the Revolution. That alone was enough to make it unpopular. It was invoked on behalf of the federal government, not always wisely, to meet seditious attacks at a time of acute political partisanship. Thus it became an issue in partisan politics. Many jurisdictions rejected it in the fore part of the last century and set up a doctrine that nothing was a crime unless made so by statute. When one perceives the huge mass of legislation which this doctrine makes necessary—e.g., in Ohio recently there were 15,367 sections in the statute law, in Michigan there were 15,532, and in Missouri 13,672—he may perhaps think that the common-law method of laying down a general principle, leaving details to be worked out by that principle as they arise, was much to be preferred. Not a little of the flood of legislation, of which so much complaint is heard, is necessitated by a doctrine that all details of police regulation must be laid down in the written law. This was well enough one hundred years ago. It is no longer workable in the metropolitan cities of to-day.

Grave obstacles stand in the way of improvement. The present system works well enough in the average rural community, and legislators from those communities see no need of change. The instinct of the lawyer to scrutinize with suspicion all projects of reform has always retarded progress. Imperfection of our legislative methods and inadequacy of our agencies of informing the legislature will hold back statutory improvements. The cult of incompetency, which is an unhappy by-product of democracy, will go along with popular impatience to rush us for a time into ill-conceived projects. Popular suspicion of lawyers, and hence of well-conceived and carefully prepared projects of reform, will impede the adoption of durable measures. Nor may it be denied that the self-interest of the lower stratum of the bar is not unlikely to put obstructions in the way of reform.

But these obstacles will hinder little,

in the end, if our projects of reform have a sound basis in thorough, impartial, scientific research. If our law schools were endowed and equipped for research as our medical schools are, we might expect great things from them. Nowhere else shall we find the conditions of continuity of investigation, permanence of tenure, independence of politics, and assured competency, scientific spirit and scientific method, without which the necessary research will fall short of its purpose. We cannot expect legislative commissions at all comparable to the English royal commissions of the last century. We can expect our law schools, through chairs of criminal law, of legislation, of judicial organization and administration, and of comparative law, to lay broad and deep foundations on which our legislators may build with confidence.

FOOL'S BURIAL

BY HILDEGARDE FILLMORE

IF you had waited, foolish Love, to die,
I would have fetched fine mourning from the town:
Rich words, and splendid bitterness to lie
About your head in thick funereal crown.
There had been dusky plumes of old desire
And for your body's ease a silken shroud
Of stuff called sacrifice, that men admire—
That were a death to make a lover proud.

The world will never know you walked, a king,
Into my heart no longer free to dare;
I bent to do your will in everything
And heaped up tribute that would make you fair.
Where did you spend the treasure that I gave,
To lie all naked in a beggar's grave?

WHEN THE MOVIES GO ABROAD

BY CHARLES MERZ

THE mountain did not go to Mohammed, but America calls on Malay. I have stood in the streets of a sun-baked village north of Singapore and watched a Ford car head into virgin jungle with five reels of a great passion jugged in a tin box on its running-board. Somewhere in the bush an audience of home-loving Malays will see to-night the gay white way. A tattered sheet will be stretched between two stanchions in a copra shed. A back wheel will be jacked up, and under a sky that is black with heat a dizzy little motor will hum its owner's praise, throwing on the screen a dim light whereby an audience of two hundred natives will behold American life as it is lived, presumably, in our best families.

The ends of the earth are not too far. These movies of ours go everywhere.

A young Jew stands at the gateway of the Garden of Gethsemane and fumbles with a handbill. It tells him that "Why Men Leave Home" will play to-night three blocks beyond the Via Dolorosa.

A Chinese coolie in the Yangtse Valley shuffles his feet and skids around the corner with a bamboo cane. No need to tell his friends what the joke is about. They too have followed the flights of Charlie Chaplin.

A small Brazilian braces himself for the fifth reel of "Forbidden Passion," too absorbed in love to wonder what an American home would be without a bell-cord and a leopard skin.

There is no country in the world into which the American movie has not pushed its enterprising way and brought its gossip and its folklore, its sugary morals and its happy endings.

Listen to the warning of an Englishman:

Lord Lee of Fareham told an audience in London recently that the American movie is a positive menace to the world. It gushes, he declared. It spills over with cheap sentiment. It is wholly unrepresentative of life in the United States. It is used by Bolsheviks to stir up trouble. "From your point of view as well as ours," he said, with his face turned toward America, "to send us trash of this description is fraught with terrible consequences not only in this country but in every country in the world."

This statement has been followed by other alarmist statements issuing from other British peers. Do such critics of American pictures show themselves too nervous? What manner of movies are these which go abroad and get themselves debated in the House of Commons? Why should the Bolsheviks take an interest in the pilgrimage of the covered wagon and the drama of the custard pie?

The truth is, probably, that the movies have grown up and gone visiting without attracting much attention to their foreign travels. Yet these travels are now an important factor in the industry. They have a considerable bearing upon American prestige overseas. For there is no question of the amazing reach of American films, or the completeness of their domination of the foreign market. Mr. Hoover's export data in the Department of Commerce show that there is not a single country in the

world, with the exception of a few far-off and privately managed colonies of France, in which American films do not outnumber the sum total of all other films. In most cases the outnumbering is two to one. And in the case of all the important markets—England, France, Canada, Australia, Japan, the Argentine—it is three to one, or four to one, or even five to one.

We grow used to hearing it said that the movies have become overnight a mammoth industry; but most of us have given little thought to the fact that this mammoth industry had gone adventuring overseas, and that we are suddenly, and actually, exporting not only goods but ideas. Yet that is what we are doing, and that is what disturbs Lord Lee. For the export is an avalanche, everywhere—with what effect upon our prestige overseas?

II

Consider, first, the charges brought against the American movie by its critics. This is what they say of it:

1. It is wholly misrepresentative of life in the United States. This is the burden of Lord Lee's own criticism. It is the burden of other criticisms, including that of Mr. Hughes when he was in the Cabinet. "I wish, indeed," said Mr. Hughes, commenting upon certain difficulties he had met abroad, "that that important educational instrument, the moving picture, was not so frequently used in foreign countries to give forth impressions of American life. It is most discouraging to reflect upon the extent to which the best efforts of educators and men of public affairs are thwarted by the subtle influence of a pernicious distortion among other peoples with respect to the way in which our people live."

2. The American movie is hard on public morals. There cannot be so much vice anywhere, its critics say, as manages to intrude upon the screen. Lust, greediness, infidelity, murder, malevolence, depravity—the wide world is invited to believe that the Statue of Liberty holds a red light and that the Tenderloin ends where the West begins.

3. The American movie is too nationalistic. Its heroes spring from native soil; "foreigners" supply its villains. It knows one flag and one flag only. That flag must wave if any waving is in order. When "Peter Pan" was done at Hollywood, Peter did not wave—as Barrie had him wave—the Union Jack. Peter waved the Stars and Stripes, like a good naturalized American.

4. The American movie is too everlastingly commercial in its point of view. "We are becoming tired," complains the London *Morning Post*, "of those wearisome financial transactions which give the impression that one half of the world is perpetually seeking to 'do' the other."

5. The American movie is pretentious. Bernard Shaw sums up objections on this point when he complains of "over-exposed faces against under-exposed backgrounds, vulgar and silly sub-titles, impertinent lists of everybody employed in the film from the star actress to the press agent's office-boy. . . . We shall soon have to sit for ten minutes at the beginning of every reel to be told who developed it, who dried it, who provided the celluloid, who sold the chemicals and who cut the author's hair. Your film people simply don't know how to behave themselves. They take liberties with the public at every step on the strength of their reckless enterprise and expenditure."

6. Finally, the American film actually imperils the safety of great empires. It does this, so its critics say, by lowering the prestige of the white man in the Orient. Lieutenant Commander Kenworthy rises in the British House of Commons to warn his colleagues of a threat in India; the London *Daily Chronicle* asks whether the British Empire can be conceived as "holding together indefinitely" with American movies catering to native crowds in Asia; and a distinguished and remarkable company

of British citizens headed by Lord Carson, Thomas Hardy, and the Poet Laureate warns of "the far-reaching consequences of inferior productions which are neither healthy nor patriotic." It is here that the Bolsheviks are said to enter into the equation: using cheap melodrama to undermine the prestige of white governments at home. What could be more silly, they are supposed to say to India and Syria and Malay, than to let yourselves be ruled by duffers who spend fortunes on their clothes, have no god but money, indulge in every form of inane folly, have no home life and use axle-grease to smooth their hair?

III

So read the charges brought against the American movie when it goes abroad —charges running the gamut of good taste, good faith, good international manners; and there is probably not a moving-picture prince in Hollywood so self-assured as to maintain that there is no truth in them. Some part of this indictment, certainly, is fair. Quite possibly, the whole indictment. Where shall we draw the line?

Line-drawing is difficult in such affairs. Line-drawing is difficult because the raw material on which judgments rest is essentially haphazard. How much do we know, really, of the effect of celluloid vice in Malay or in India? How certain are we that the point on which the impresario in Hollywood has lavished ingenuity and money is even understood? Not all pictures register as their creators first intended. Not all audiences can even read. Thus, for example, there has grown up in many countries in the East the institution of a story-teller who stands beside the screen and instructs the audience in what is happening. In Japan I have encountered such an interlocutor, known there as a "*benshi*," whose idea of each picture was essentially his own, and who, unable to read the titles in English, made up titles to suit his fancy as he went along. Sometimes, under his deft touch, comedy turned tragedy and tragedy turned comedy; but the net effect, provided each reel had its share of action, was apparently as pleasing as if everyone had understood the story. Why not? After all, who needs to be told, when the bullets fly, that this is an open space where men are men?

We shall do well, all things considered, to go slow in pronouncing judgments concerning either the message which an almost endless variety of moving pictures carries overseas, or the effect of this theoretical message upon a vast audience of unlike people living all over the world in every century of culture from the thirteenth to the twentieth. If we are going to pronounce judgments and have them better than mere guesswork, we shall stick to conclusions which have some visible evidence behind them. A few such conclusions are unmistakable, I think; and one of them is this: that the American movie is the spearhead of a new trade offensive, sinister if you happen to be on the wrong end of it.

We can number our facts here and be fairly certain of them. We can note, first, that the conquest of the American movie is a recent conquest, still in its early, jostling stages: only in 1912 did the export of American film begin to be considered of enough importance to justify its mention in our trade statistics; now we export annually 170 million linear feet of developed film, with a revenue in sales value estimated at $75,000,000. We can note, second, that this export covers every corner of the world: our five great markets overseas, in the order of importance, are the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Argentine, and Japan; each of the five is in a separate continent; to each of the five goes more American film in a single season than is produced at home in half a dozen seasons. We can note, third, that there is evidence abroad of resentment at this Yankee domination. Thus in France a decree has been wrung from the government by the picture industry,

to the effect that after January 1, 1928, no pictures on inflammable film (that is, American pictures) may be imported; in Germany a "*kontingent*" plan is already in force whereby only one American film may be shown for every German film displayed; in England Sir Oswald Stoll, who speaks for the British producer, objects that his country "is placed in the position of a defeated people, conquered by America," and the President of the Board of Trade proposes a special system of license fees to shake England loose of Hollywood.

But all this—evidence of a trade war inside the industry itself—is only one small section of a much wider trade offensive. For, as Mr. Will H. Hays was accustomed to point out occasionally, with more eloquence before it began to strike him as an indiscretion, the commercial importance of the moving picture reaches far beyond the theater. "It is interesting to note," said Mr. Hays, in an interview last February, "that our Department of Commerce reports our films as the silent salesmen of American goods." To moving-picture influence, Mr. Hays affirmed, could frequently be traced fresh conquests overseas.

There is the best of evidence that Mr. Hays was right last February, and is more right to-day. Automobiles manufactured here are ordered abroad after screen shadows have been observed to ride in them; China wants sewing-machines; rich Peruvians buy piano-players; orders come to Grand Rapids from Japanese who have admired mission armchairs in the films. Mr. E. A. Bughan of the London *Daily News* complains that the Americanization of the British public is an accomplished fact; Lord Newton tells the House of Commons that Yorkshire manufacturers of boots and clothing have been obliged to alter their plants because the Near East now wishes to dress like Rudolph Valentino. "Americans," asserts Lord Newton, "realized almost simultaneously with the cinema this heaven-sent method of advertising themselves, their country, methods, wares, ideas, even language, and seized on it as a method of persuading the whole world that only America matters."

By these presents trade no longer follows the flag. It follows the film. Who can doubt it? Mr. Hays, thinking this over and worrying about restrictive measures in foreign markets, may now choose to hush Mr. Hoover's drums. But certainly no nation ever possessed so effective an instrument for overseas development. The moving picture has achieved, unwittingly, what different Powers in different times have built navies, levied taxes, intrigued, coerced, and slaughtered in order to achieve.

Not unnaturally, the conquest has left certain traces of resentment.

IV

What does the foreigner see when the moving picture shows him the United States? He sees Hollywood. He sees Hollywood so exclusively that there is a second fact which can be noted of the movie when it goes abroad—it makes a hash of its America.

For we can be as cautious as we like in the matter of snap judgments about the psychology of foreigners and their reactions to our films, one thing is certain—the films themselves are proof that no foreigner, whatever his psychology, can by the wildest flight of fancy discover in our films a realistic picture of America.

How could he? The America he sees is neither the America of Bryan nor of Barnum nor of Henry Cabot Lodge. It is an America of happy endings, goody-goody heroes, comedy policemen stumbling into man-holes, posses disappearing in the dust, bathing girls, and human flies. Here, in a synopsis clipped from a foreign moving-picture magazine, is life in Texas:

Peggy Martin and her father need mortgage money from the oil well leased to a shady promoter, Brill, who receives a bribe

from the foreclosing landlord to suspend the working. Peggy has a madcap girl friend, Tex, who goes to vamp Brill to save the Martins. Tex is saved from Brill's clutches by Billy, a young man whom Peggy knows by correspondence only. The landlord fires the well out of revenge, and Peggy is saved from its summit by a rope from an aeroplane containing Billy.

This picture is called "Witch's Lure."

Here, also clipped from a foreign source, is life in a more urban area, perhaps in Cleveland or Dubuque:

Germaine makes an "arranged" marriage with Lucien, a rich but uncouth aristocrat, and this half kills her romantic dreams. He hears that she is leaving him; whereupon he dissipates his fortune in pleasure. Germaine, with her wooer, eventually finds him bankrupt, and witnesses his humorous predicaments in a restaurant where he has no money. From a wanton she learns of his fidelity, and becomes reunited to him.

This picture is called "She Wolves."

Both films are new and both are average. The American producer makes no special effort with his foreign market. There was a time, not many years ago, when he gave it this much special interest: frequently he made two versions of each film instead of only one—a relatively tame and dehydrated version for the local market; a livelier and more provoking version for the foreign trade, with scenes of love and rapture run beyond the point where it was thought wise to shut them off, at home. This business of salting pictures with particularly salacious bits, I understand, is out of style. Possibly the explanation is a change of heart. Possibly it is Mr. Hays. More than likely the fact that aggressive censorships have now appeared in every major foreign market does something to explain the change. At any rate, censors the world over are now snipping indelicacies from American film.

What of it, really? The trouble is not vice but manifest absurdity. Censorships do not bear on that. Censorships simply tinker with the length of skirt, the hilarity of café brawls, the fervor of a kiss held over-long. They do not and can not touch at any point the essentials of a picture or sift the bogus from the real. The most iron-handed censorship that man has yet devised might be set up on every foreign frontier and there would still pass by it the whole flood of innocuous and inane trash which misrepresents a much-suffering America. Life in Texas would still consist of a series of hair-raising rescues from oil-derricks via aeroplane; life in the great cities would still be life in sinks of iniquity, pitting young Horatio Algers against the night-life of the cabarets; human nature would still be drawn in blacks and whites, and men be what they are when the director casts them—either smug heroes, smug friends of heroes, or else knaves; morality would still be a matter of Mr. DeMille's reactions to the Sunday papers; success a dinner-coat, and pathos something to be turned on and off like water in a bath-tub; the ideal of American womanhood would still be Pollyanna.

We may fairly ask if life exists anywhere (certainly it does not exist in the United States) in such stereotypes as the moving-picture magnate uses in his films. Such conceptions as he invites the rest of the world to entertain about America may be exhilarating to the young, but they do not make for much straight thinking as between one nation and its neighbors. If, as I have suggested, the first clear result of the movies' conquest is a trade war, the second is this muddying of international thought.

V

The box-office does not make a specialty of international thought. It has other interests. Is there any good reason, really, why we should expect the movies to portray America realistically or to help people think in a straight line, rather than a crooked line, about their neighbors?

The movies are not a public institution

subsidized for the promotion of sweetness and light, or even light, throughout the world. They are a business enterprise. As such, though from time to time their makers permit themselves to be interviewed on the subject of creative art, they cater to their markets. And the great market is not Cairo or Singapore, but the market here at home. This country has the theaters. It has almost twenty thousand theaters, and there is not another country in the world with even a fourth as many houses where pictures may be shown. There are only five other countries in the world which have a tenth as many houses. One result is the ability to spend money on production and to recoup it here at home which—rather than any technical excellence or genius in the matter of acting taught by correspondence in two weeks—gives the American picture its commanding lead abroad. A second result is the care with which the industry watches these twenty thousand theaters for signs of what is wanted. In the last analysis all major considerations in the making of a film boil down to this: "How will they like the thing in Oshkosh?" If Oshkosh, discerning neither drama nor romance in its own environment, prefers New York as a background for untoward events, then the wide world sees life "pepped up" and "jazzed up" in the stereotypes which Hollywood thinks Oshkosh uses for New York. The essentials of a successful photoplay, as a British visitor in California found them recently, are these: 1—"You gotta leave 'em happy." 2—"The boy has gotta get the girl and get the dough." 3—"Leave 'em all dolled up and driving off in a big car." Which leads the British visitor to remark that there will be no essential change in moving-picture making "until scenario writers and producers have the courage to reveal to their fans philosophic happiness as opposed to happiness in terms of dough, car, and girl."

But who wants philosophic happiness? Certainly it is clear that when we say the American producer aims to make pictures he can sell, we have only said one-half of what needs saying. Could he sell any other pictures, even if he made them? Can we be certain that these foreigners who buy our films would rather understand us than misunderstand us?

The business of understanding another nation is usually a tedious and weary enterprise, set down by the moving-picture people under the general heading, "educational." Such films are not best-sellers. True, there is an occasional picture which is both "educational" and moderately successful from a box-office point of view. Such a picture was "Grass," which came to this country with a vivid and dramatic story of nomad life on the desert's edge. This picture, it is my own guess, did as much to make clear to one people the life of another people living at a distance as anything which has been filmed or written since the discovery of communication. But it was an exceptional picture, fortunate in the possession of a stirring background. There is no assurance whatever that an equally honest and straightforward portrayal of life, let us say, in Keokuk, Iowa, would do equally well on the other side of the Atlantic. There is, in fact, every reason to believe that it would do shamefully, and that in the matter of box-office receipts "She Wolves" would run rings around it in every port from Brest to Nagasaki. Certainly there is no expert council in the foreign market advising American producers to go in for counterparts of "Grass." Scan the consular reports for their suggestions as to what sells best. "Send sensational and humorous pictures"—thus the American consul in Constantinople. "Send slapstick"—thus the American trade commissioner in Bombay. "Send luxurious society dramas, farce comedies and sex problem films"—thus the American consul in Montevideo.

Unquestionably it would be a fine thing, and from an international point of view a hopeful thing, if five hundred pictures on the style of "Grass" could

make their appearance each year, cover the whole world in their travels, and clear up areas of misunderstanding. But because this seems desirable it need not blind us to the fact that there is usually a better market for a bogus thrill than for an honest bit of fact-reporting, and that the last thing one nation wishes to hear about another nation is what both nations have in common. Ask the traveler home from India, who wishes to discuss that country's approach to civic problems of the sort we have at home: his audience will interrupt to ask him what a harem looks like, and how the yogi does the rope trick. Ask the traveler home from Japan, who wishes to discuss the economic background of the immigration issue: his friends will plead with him to supply, instead, an eye-witness story of the golden cages in the Yoshiwara, or more light upon the mooted question whether Japanese ladies actually do wash Japanese gentlemen in the public baths of Kobe. People ordinarily do not wish to be told how they are like other people; they wish to be told how they are unlike other people. They do not wish so much to be told how other people live and work as to be told how other people (it makes small difference whether they are real or not) grow rich, waste fortunes, snub one another, kill for love and quarrel. The fact of the matter, probably, is that the movie can move no faster in the direction of bringing people to understand one another than the people themselves desire to be moved. The movie, in that respect, is like the radio. The mechanical perfection of the instrument itself is one thing. How it will be used is quite another. There are plenty of radios in the world to-day which are being used to promote international understanding. There are plenty of other radios which are being used to stir up trouble. There are still more radios which are being used to waft across the seas the strains of "Red Hot Mamma."

Nor do we, in saying this, need either to blunt the point of any conclusions at which this article has previously arrived or to be too pessimistic about the future.

The American movie is taking us into a new type of trade war largely without our knowing it.

The American movie is caricaturing us cruelly enough to lay the basis for a libel suit.

But the American movie is also carrying a vast amount of decent and indecent fun into every back street of Europe and of Asia, into every kitchen where a woman cooks a humdrum meal, and into every factory where men look at the sun through smoky windows. It will probably never be made that vehicle of straight thinking which it is capable of being made. But the chance is there. For here is the one medium which knows no frontiers. Language varies, manners vary, money varies, even railway gauges vary. The one universal unit in the world to-day is that slender ribbon which can carry hocus-pocus, growing-pains and dreams.

VENEER

A STORY

BY LEE FOSTER HARTMAN

IT WOULD never have happened except for some cynical prompting of Kilmartin's—at two o'clock in the morning—which Blakeslee and I had too easily fallen in with. A passing taxi had been hailed, and now the three of us were crowded about a little table, wedged in among many others, while our ears were deafened by a magnificent barbaric jazz.

It was one of those negro cabarets in the heart of the black blocks of Harlem—lawless, flamboyant, sordid. Here and there were white faces—women sheathed in silk, with gleaming necks and arms, men in dinner coats—Nordic faces in this roomful of wide-eyed and expectant blacks. We sat in a murk of revelry and bad air and—suddenly—in darkness.

Half-naked forms came out upon the dance floor in two snakelike files and, mingling together in a complicated maze, their bodies swayed and writhed, to the throb of the music. The whole room pulsated to that weird, syncopated beat. Above it rose the chromatic wail of saxophones; banjos bleated; trombones blared; and the rasping of fantastic "traps" shattered through it all. Dusky limbs and bodies flashed and poised and flashed again, in a frenzied ritual of eccentric movement.

We might have been plunged into the heart of a primitive land, beyond the last outpost of civilization, unwitting spectators of some orgiastic rite. Only the narrow ray of a spotlight, cutting through the gloom and throwing into relief the cavorting body of the chief dancer, betrayed the artifice of the spectacle. And even that chill, blue-white shaft was like a thin pencil of moonlight, piercing some gap of foliage to disclose in the depths of the jungle secret and unspeakable things.

Something exotic, barbaric gripped and at the same time revolted me. I looked across at Kilmartin, who had brought us here, fastidiously correct in his evening clothes, sophisticated, disdainful. He didn't "class" with the white habitués of the place, drawn thither by the coarse lure of wine and flesh and jazz. He sat with a cigar dangling from his long fingers, in a vast and cynical detachment, and he had the air of being mildly bored with it all.

Meanwhile the whole room hung intent upon the central figure of the dance: a dark-skinned youth, of incredible swiftness and grace. The spotlight cleaved him from the surrounding darkness like a knife. It illumined each line of his glistening, quivering body, as legs and arms described their gyrations. As the tempo quickened and the music throbbed more shrill, he achieved sheer flashes of movement which outstripped my gaze. The rolling whites of his eyes drew me with an almost hypnotic spell. The spectacle became something no longer quite human; the music, an unearthly cry. The room, the table at which we sat, seemed to fall away into a limbo of unreality. All life seemed converged within that splash of blue-white light, in which a half-naked savage danced. . . .

The thing ended abruptly in a final cacophonic clash from the orchestra. The dancer and his retinue vanished. Lights everywhere flashed on, revealing a bare and polished floor, toward which, as the music began anew, there was an uprush from the tables.

In a moment the place was thronged with couples in grotesque embrace, jostled and thrust about, a turbid mass of humanity that swirled and eddied to the urge of the music. The voluptuous tide lapped against our table. Eyes ogled us, faces leered. Kilmartin, aloof, unmindful of the reek of perfume and the barbaric crash of sound, suddenly leaned toward us.

"Veneer!" he flung out sardonically, lifting his voice above the tumult. "That is what civilization amounts to—the thinnest sort of veneer. In a place like this you can see it crack and peel off."

Blakeslee bridled at once. "Nigger-dive," he retorted. "Beastly place, of course."

Kilmartin smiled derisively. "That's where you miss the point, Blakeslee. As of course you would. We are all savages under the skin. Under the veneer, I mean. Civilization hasn't changed the brute in us a bit. Given us a little surface polish, the merest shine. Disrupt our complex artificial environment, and it would rub off over night. We'd be scrambling up trees and bickering venomously at one another from the branches—or amorously, as the case might be—"

"Cigars! Cigarettes!"

A shrill voice at my shoulder caused me to turn. I confronted two vivid splotches of rouge outrageously overlaid upon cheeks of chocolate-brown, and two thin dark arms, whitened with powder, thrusting a tray upon us. Kilmartin reached for a handful of cigars and tossed the girl a bill.

"That's all rot, Kilmartin," Blakeslee objected. He was small and rotund, and now deeply serious. "Why, even these niggers are immeasurably above the wild brutes their ancestors were—the kind you've risked your own skin among in Africa. Three centuries of civilization have worked a miracle. They've been lifted out of the depths of savagery—"

"Yes, I know," Kilmartin jeered. "Knocked over the head, manacled, thrown into the hold of a slave-ship. If you died, or seemed likely to, you were fished out and thrown overboard. However, score one there for civilization, if you like."

"Well, that may be, but my point is that these people here are a long way from beasts in primeval mud huts. They've got real homes—steam heat, electric light, gas stoves, and all that sort of thing. They've got fine clothes, jewelry, money—money even for this sort of fool squandering. Thanks to civilization, they aren't grubbing about in a jungle and trying to eat one another, as their ancestors did."

"Mere surface differences. That's precisely my point," Kilmartin calmly persisted. "Veneer!" he reiterated. "You and I may have a thicker coating of it. Call it sophistication, anything you like. It's a mere shell, a flimsy pretense."

Kilmartin exhaled a cloud of smoke, through which he surveyed the scene with an air of benign and utter disillusionment. There were lines of fatigue about his eyes. He had the look of a man prematurely tired of life, yet worn out in soul rather than in body. My old wonder about him was stirred anew. His years in Africa had dealt mysteriously with him. He had penetrated deep into the interior, ostensibly absorbed in the study of obscure tropical diseases. He was reticent as to those long stretches of months in which he had lived remote from his own kind. When at last he had emerged from the somber heart of those obscure regions, it was with a darkened and cryptic philosophy. As good-hearted little Blakeslee once observed to me, his face lined with concern—something had gotten into Kilmartin; he seemed spiritually tainted. But there was no probing the man. One could

only note the gaunt face, burned deep by the tropic sun, the veiled yet penetrating eyes, the cynical, indulgent smile, and speculate vainly. . . .

The jazz crashed and surged over me unheeded, and in my reverie I lost track of the conversation. Presently I grew aware that Blakeslee and Kilmartin had fallen into outright dispute.

"That young chap who led the dance? Oh, nonsense, Kilmartin. . . . You're crazy."

"I'll wager you . . . anything you like. . . . Yes, that dancer. I know the type perfectly."

I leaned forward to pick up the argument. "What are you two talking about?"

"Kilmartin declares that if you took one of these niggers back to Africa—lifted him clean out of civilization—a complete and utter break with it—he'd revert, turn savage."

"And what's more," Kilmartin added dryly, "I've offered to prove it."

The music ended, and we were in the swirl of the dancers surging back to their tables.

"There's your young hopeful now," announced Blakeslee.

I recognized the protagonist of the cabaret performance, who had achieved a quick change into clothes of a dandified, flashy cut which bespoke the theatrical alleys of Broadway. He had joined a group at a near-by table.

Kilmartin appraised him with half-shut eyes. "The very man I want. Look here, Blakeslee. For thirty cents—"

"Make it a thousand dollars!" Blakeslee retorted jocosely.

"Just as you like," Kilmartin assented indifferently. "I've been planning to go back to Africa. This sort of experiment might offer an amusing distraction." His eyes narrowed thoughtfully upon the dancer. "Give me a year or two, of course. . . . But time is nothing . . . not in those places."

"Oh, come, Kilmartin." I didn't like the way he was studying the negro, nor the cruel smile on his lips. "Let's get out of here. It's after three."

Kilmartin yielded, and the subject was forgotten. Out in the morning air we confronted the more important business of securing a taxi. . . .

But Kilmartin, always eccentric and incalculable, had not forgotten, as I was to discover a couple of weeks later. In some devious and inexplicable way, quite characteristic of the man, he had proceeded to snare his bird.

"It's positively uncanny," Blakeslee poured out the news to me over the telephone. "He's actually got hold of that colored boy. You'll find him at Kilmartin's place now. And Kilmartin's preparing to set off for Africa. Go and see for yourself."

Having an idle hour on my hands, I promptly did so. I went round to Kilmartin's quarters, to find them in a state of dismantlement. Trunks stood about, in process of being packed, and out of the confusion Kilmartin waved me a salutation with his pipe. He was wearing a dressing gown, bizarrely striped, which accentuated his gaunt height. The pipe, too, was of inordinate length and grotesque shape—one of the multitudinous queer objects that Kilmartin's rooms abounded in.

"Hail and farewell!" he saluted me. "Off to London. Then to Africa, by the first boat."

I was staring at the melange of exotic riffraff, stripped from walls and cabinets and now going into storage, when a young negro entered, to deposit an armful of things in one of the open trunks. When he straightened up I recognized the dancer of the Harlem cabaret. For an instant his eyes met mine—a swift and furtive glance. The youth seemed cowed and uneasy. In his present menial task his clothes with their flashy Broadway cut added a touch of the incongruous.

When he had left the room I turned to Kilmartin, to find him watching me with a sort of sardonic interest.

"The great experiment," he announced ironically. "If you remember —my wager with Blakeslee."

"But what I don't understand—"

"Of course. Neither does Blakeslee. I've left him quite mystified, but I don't mind telling you."

In twenty words I had the gist of the affair. He reminded me that the police held an almost despotic control over certain of the lower strata of citizenry. These unfortunate individuals, when confronted with the alternative of having something out of their past dragged to light, were surprisingly amenable to dictation. If their past conduct did not offer a sufficiently compelling *motif*, a hypothetical one could usually be framed up. I gathered further that some high municipal dignitary was under particular obligation to Kilmartin. The latter had conveyed to that gentleman his wish that a certain young negro should accompany him abroad. Within forty-eight hours, Thomas Jefferson Quince—to divest him of his professional name—presented himself to Kilmartin. He was ready—nay, eager—to accompany the latter on his travels.

"Blakeslee, bless his heart, can see nothing in this but sheer necromancy," Kilmartin ended. "He doesn't begin to understand the ways of his precious civilization which he lauds so highly. He can't see beneath the veneer. . . . Well, here's a hearty farewell to it."

He fell into a deep rumination. I imagined his thoughts transporting him into the heart of that dark country where, under that queer, inexplicable urge of scientific inquiry, he would bury himself again, with microscope, test-tubes, and cultures.

Again there came a soft tread; a dark negroid head was bent for a moment over the trunk. There was again the furtive glance at me, and then the all but noiseless retreat. My thoughts turned to this other fantastic enterprise born of Kilmartin's whim. And suddenly it seemed a gruesome thing. The absurd idea crept over me that Kilmartin might somehow accomplish his diabolical purpose.

"Look here, Kilmartin. Just what do you propose to do with this poor devil, dragged off into the jungle with you? This wager with Blakeslee is a silly business."

"Blakeslee be hanged," he answered lazily. "This is my own affair. I've often thought of trying it. Off—out—in—there . . . One gets many queer ideas. This young buck—" Kilmartin's somber eyes seemed to kindle with queer anticipation. "You may think I'm crazy, but I'm not. It will be interesting to watch . . . But of no importance. A mere biological regression."

"More like vivisection upon a human soul," I interposed.

"Blakeslee might call it that. Poor Blakeslee! He already thinks I've been up to some dark necromancy." Kilmartin paused and presently a faint smile stole to his lips. "There may be necromancy . . . later."

It was this picture of him that I was to carry in memory for many months: his lean, angular form athwart a chair, over one arm of which his long legs dangled; the bizarre striped dressing-gown; the barbaric pipe at his lips; and in the droop of his shoulders that despondency of soul which I was never to fathom.

He was gone, a week later. A couple of months went by and there came a card, written on board a French vessel somewhere off the African west coast—a briefly scrawled good-luck and good-by—and I was left to infer that he had plunged into the interior and that it had closed over him, taking him into its dark heart. And then a twelvemonth of silence. Meanwhile I lost track of Blakeslee, only to learn later that he had gone abroad. The whole incident faded into the background of memory, at last all but forgotten.

It was to be abruptly revived one June day two years later, when, on a visit to London myself, I came face to face with Blakeslee in Piccadilly Circus.

"You—of all people!" he gasped. "Well, this *is* luck."

Shouldered by the throng that surged around us, I had only a confused impression of surprise writ large upon his face, now strangely thin and darkened. There was no chance, standing there in that crowded thoroughfare, to exchange two years' arrears of gossip, and I could see that he was brimming over with intelligence.

"Come along to my hotel," he insisted, catching hold of my arm. "I've got astounding news for you."

I allowed him to lead me where he would. "By the way," I suddenly inquired, for the sight of him had stirred old recollections, "did you ever hear anything more of Kilmartin?"

We were thrust apart for the moment by the passing throng, but I could see that he was nodding his head energetically in answer to my question. "Dear me, yes," he said, when we had fallen into step again. "That's what I want to tell you about. You see, after a year or so, I couldn't stand it any longer. I went to Africa to look for him."

"You went to Africa!" The thought of little Blakeslee adventuring on such a quest struck me as tremendously absurd.

"Yes, I did," he answered simply. "Come along to my hotel, and I'll tell you all about it."

We were speedily in his rooms, where he fussily looked to my comfort. Would I have tea, or a brandy and soda?

"But tell me about Kilmartin," I insisted. "It's nearly three years now. I had almost forgotten."

"I never could forget—not for one moment." A look of acute distress came over his face. "That colored boy—you remember? Somehow, Kilmartin's taking him off didn't seem quite right. What was Kilmartin really up to? I always had an uneasy feeling that he wasn't quite right in his mind. I know he's done brilliant scientific work. But there was that queer streak in him, that made you sort of afraid. And it was really my fault that he took that poor fellow along with him. Hoping to see him turn savage, do you remember? The thing weighed on my conscience. And finally—well, I couldn't stand it any longer, so I decided to look Kilmartin up."

"In the depths of a continent!" I exclaimed, dumfounded at the sheer temerity of the undertaking.

"Well, of course, the affair did present difficulties," he admitted. "And then again, it was much easier than one might anticipate. I at least knew the port on the west coast where he had gone in. Once there, I made inquiries. He had gone up a river. He was somewhere in the interior. No word had come for several months. However, there was a boat which made trips up the river. I chartered it to go farther. A bit of luck perhaps, but we found him."

"Luck! Well, rather!" I exclaimed.

"The luck wasn't so much in finding him," he went on quite earnestly, "as it was in happening along in the very nick of time."

Blakeslee shook his head over the recollection. He took up a cigar and stared at it absently without lighting it.

"It took some rough going at the finish," he resumed. "You see, he had pushed on beyond the last of the river stations into a district that the ivory hunters rather avoided. You've never tackled the jungle, have you? Well, my advice is, don't. It's—it's awful."

Blakeslee's shrunken cheeks suddenly took on significance. Clearly he had been through something. The twinkle was gone from his blue eyes.

"Incidentally, the district we finally got into was not altogether safe," he went on to explain. "That's what Captain Martin, who owned and piloted that steamboat, kept telling me. We had gone on, day after day, up that sluggish yellow river that seemed interminable. Just two continuous walls of impenetrable forest which slowly parted before us and then closed together astern. It was like some endless, gigantic pano-

rama, of a world still plunged in the primeval silence of creation. And straight into the heart of it steamed that ridiculous boat, belching out wood-smoke, driving a vast ripple across that immense stretch of water as unruffled as a mirror, and profaning the silence of the ages with its crazy racket.

"And never a sign of a living soul. The river gradually narrowed, and at last Captain Martin drew in toward shore. This was the place, he guessed. And he was right, thanks to some cabalistic jungle craft which I couldn't understand. We plunged inland, and sure enough, we struck a trail. And the next day we found Kilmartin.

"Or rather we came upon the dilapidated shacks where he lived. He wasn't there. But there were his microscope and books and papers and all that bacteriological riffraff—a queer make-shift laboratory, with bottles everywhere . . . filled with solutions of some sort, capped with gauze."

Blakeslee shook his head as if over a distasteful recollection.

"The place gave me the creeps, coming abruptly out of the bush upon that queer jumble of savagery and scientific paraphernalia. There were native spears and knives stuck around on the walls, the most murderous-looking things imaginable. And heads of strange animals, badly mounted, and looking particularly gruesome. On the table, doing duty as paper-weights, were a couple of skulls—and none too yellowed with age. Flattened foreheads and thick protruding jawbones—but human, I have no doubt.

"A characteristic Kilmartin touch, I was thinking, when suddenly he appeared, as if he had materialized out of the air. I felt a hand clapped on my shoulder, and it gave me an awful start. There was Kilmartin, in a ragged and very soiled suit that had once been white. He had grown a full beard, which covered his face, but his eyes were as penetrating as ever, and he still had that way of looking at you, with his head down, from under lowered lids. He saluted Captain Martin, whom of course he knew, and then turned to me to observe that I was a long way from home.

"There was a bottle of whiskey on the table, from which he filled three glasses, rather shakily. I suspected that he had already had several drinks himself. 'Sorry. No ice, of course,' and he lifted his glass to us, steadied himself on his legs, and emptied it in one gulp. Then his eye at once sought the bottle. With his glass refilled, he slumped down upon a bench and began a sardonic inspection of me.

"There was that same cynical warp to his mind, and he eyed me with a sort of outright amusement, as if my hunting him out was the greatest joke on earth. 'Don't tell me that you, too, have become fed up with civilization. Have another drink.'

"But the man seemed played out, defeated. I now noticed the marks of dust and disuse upon his scientific apparatus. The stuff in the test-tubes had thickened and taken on a dark scum; many of the gauze caps were awry. He seemed to have abandoned his experiments. A lot of his pages of penciled notes were scattered on the floor, to be merely trodden upon or kicked out of the way. There were empty whiskey bottles everywhere.

"'Are you all alone here?' I asked.

"'Alone? Well, not exactly.' He smiled to himself. 'Wait until after sundown. You'll understand.'

"I wanted to ask him about that colored boy. It was late in the afternoon, and as the shadows lengthened I kept listening for footsteps, wondering if he would come in. In the meantime we talked—of everything under the sun. Captain Martin had all the gossip of the coast, but Kilmartin was most interested in news of the outside world. I talked of everything, from Chinese uprisings to Tammany politics. He listened, at times interjecting an aloof, ironic comment, as if I were giving him news from the planet Mars. He sat with one leg under him, while from the

bare foot of the other dangled a tattered sandal which he waggled with his toes. And repeatedly he urged us to have another drink.

"Well, the afternoon was gone. It grew quite dark. He got up and lighted a candle and, pushing aside those skulls to clear a place, he brought some food to the table. It was while we were eating that dismal meal, with all the world outside plunged in the deep, tropic night, the silence broken only by the absurd rattle of our knives and plates, that there came from afar off, borne on a fugitive night breeze, the soft, long roll of drums.

"I looked up with a start, to find Kilmartin's eyes upon me. 'My esteemed neighbors,' he explained. 'I don't think they'll bother us.'

"But Captain Martin pushed his plate aside with a skeptical snort. He proceeded to fill his pipe while he launched into a tirade against Kilmartin's indifference. He wanted him to listen to reason. It was foolhardy to remain there in the bush, alive with niggers, when one of these periodical outbreaks was clearly brewing. Kilmartin knew that as well as he did. They were working themselves up now—God alone knew what went on at those night orgies. One thing was certain, an outbreak was imminent, and when it came Kilmartin would be snuffed out—like that. Captain Martin, having got his pipe alight, blew out the match.

"He went on to say that he didn't fancy having his head paraded through the bush on the end of a spear. He wouldn't be risking it now except for 'this friend of yours'—meaning me. He had figured out that perhaps the two of us could persuade Kilmartin, before it was too late, to chuck that queer, senseless business of his.

"At this point Captain Martin made a derogatory gesture toward the bacteria cultures in the bottles. What was the sense in trying to find out what killed off these niggers when, at times, they started dying like flies? The epidemics were providential. It was a blessing that the land should be rid of the surplus of them, and Kilmartin was only trying to interfere with the designs of Divine Providence.

"Just then there came again that long unearthly roll of drums from afar off in the night. It was as if that vast, silent land was suddenly astir with sinister purpose. The Captain frowned and shook his head. He couldn't understand why they hadn't made an end of Kilmartin long ago. With all that queer scientific junk around him. To those idiots in the bush it was nothing but white-man's devil-magic, and a challenge to their own.

"Kilmartin only threw back his head and laughed. Life consisted in taking chances, didn't it? In any case, the bush was safer than Fifth Avenue. He didn't relish being ignominiously mashed up by a taxi; he preferred to go down in history as a martyr to science.

"He reached for the whisky bottle and poured himself another drink. He was in the act of tasting it when there came again that long reverberation, but now with a prolonged and different note. Kilmartin paused, with the glass at his lips, and listened intently. There was a queer light in his eyes, as if the drums had suddenly spoken to him in their cryptic language. Or the man was drunk, or no longer quite sane. The threat of a swift and horrible annihilation hanging over his head seemed to have come to have a positive fascination for him. The thing had got him in its clutches like a drug which he was helpless to tear himself from.

"I ventured to add my urging to what the Captain had said, but Kilmartin cut me short by impatiently flinging his emptied glass across the room. It collided with some of those culture bottles ranged along the wall, and there was a great crash of splintering glass. He wouldn't budge an inch for any nigger or white man on earth. And as for those drums in the bush, he rather liked them. They kept his thoughts off . . . of other things. They offered . . . pictures . . .

for his imagination to fill in. And he fell into a sort of reverie, his eyes in deep contemplation of the toes of his tattered straw sandals.

"It was then that I asked him what had become of Thomas Jefferson Quince. I believe that he had actually forgotten the name. He was like a man suddenly awakened, trying to collect himself. For a long moment he blinked thoughtfully at me, and then suddenly recollection flashed upon him. He sprang to his feet, with a triumphant laugh. 'I declare, Blakeslee. You owe me a thousand dollars. Of course, you don't believe that. You couldn't.' He began to pace back and forth, his head thrust forward, his eyes alight. 'It's too incredible.'

"And then he began telling us about Quince, in short nervous snatches, with now and then a graphic bit of description that made that transformation a living, haunting picture before my eyes. He compressed days and weeks into mere sentences, months into minutes, without losing a bit of the essence of the thing. It was like the elimination of time in one of those freak pictures that are sometimes shown on the screen: you watch the sprouting, blooming, and decay of a plant all in the fraction of a minute. That's the way he gave us Quince.

"He must have cut an odd figure when first dropped down into the African bush. For he still wore those absurd clothes of a vaudeville performer, doing his two-a-day. Tight-waisted, one-button coat with flaring lapels, gorgeously colored waistcoat, pin-check trousers, and a derby hat far down over his ears at a swaggering angle. Patent-leather shoes, with white-cloth tops. Naturally they didn't last long in Kilmartin's primitive habitat under the equator. The shoes were the first to crack and drop off. And then by degrees other things were discarded. But he clung stubbornly to that gorgeous waistcoat, as if it were a sort of last link with Broadway.

"The climate got him, of course, from the very start. It made him sleepy. He was always dozing off, — after a while he would just drop down and curl up anywhere. There was practically nothing for him to do—just long, blank hours in which to dawdle about. Kilmartin ignored him like a cat under his feet. And left to shift for himself, at some stage he must have stopped dreaming of Broadway and begun to look out into the dark green depths of the jungle, and to wonder. . . ."

Blakeslee broke off at this point in his narrative and heaved a great sigh. "All of which, I ventured to point out to Kilmartin, seemed a natural enough adaptation to that damp beastly climate in an equatorial land. Whites react to it in the same way. It doesn't alienate them from civilization. On the contrary, it makes them long to get back to it.

"But Kilmartin shook his head. He raised a foot and exhibited the dilapidated sandal that dangled from his toes. 'See that? We get down to that, but we stop there. Quince didn't. Presently I noticed that he had discarded footgear altogether and was moving around with a soft, slinky tread—for all the world like one of the black brutes that would come in upon us at times. There would be these visitations from some near-by tribe. The news had spread far and wide that I was a witch-doctor. They would bring in their sick and dying—pretty awful cases, some of them—for me to try my white-man's magic upon.'

"It must have been a gruesome business for Kilmartin," Blakeslee commented, screwing up his eyes. "They brought in and laid down before him every sort of human corruption and decay. Those poor wretches that were past all help, at a mere shake of Kilmartin's head, they would calmly carry off—and abandon them in the bush. However, that's another story. Somewhere, in the background all this time was Quince. He was beginning to pick up words in the native dialect. In the evenings, when Kilmartin was busy with his microscope, he would squat in the

open doorway of the shack, looking out and listening to the silent call of the African night.

"He became habituated to the climate far sooner than a white could have done. And by now he had got down to a queer shift of dress, half white and half native. He was frequently off roaming into the bush. Then one day he disappeared, to turn up a couple of nights later, scratched and caked with mud—and, like an animal, going straight to Kilmartin's larder for food. Then he crawled off into a corner to sleep. Kilmartin ignored him, like a vagrant dog that he had come to tolerate around the place.

"These forays abroad became more frequent. The young black would be gone for days at a time, returning only when hunger pressed him. He would stuff himself with whatever he could find and then stretch out in a stuporlike sleep. Kilmartin noticed that he had reduced his costume to a loin cloth, far better adapted to prowling through the bush. In his sleep he would mumble in the native dialect, into which English words would slip with grotesque effect. Finally he disappeared altogether.

"'But at that I really believe the black rascal liked me,' Kilmartin threw out at this point in his story. 'Some sneaking, doglike affection—engendered, God knows how, in those long months of solitude. He had nothing to be grateful for. I had merely dumped him down in his ancestral home and had let him make of it what he would.'"

Blakeslee shrugged his shoulders. "Well, he was gone at last—for good. But not exactly. Some weeks later Kilmartin noticed that a rifle was missing, and a couple of nights later something else disappeared. Kilmartin didn't propose to be subject to an indefinite series of pilferings, so one night he lay in wait for the marauder and fired a shot after him into the bush. It was his final dismissal of Thomas Jefferson Quince.

"But he was still to have one last and memorable glimpse of him. Curiosity or some other urge led him one night to the place from which came the beat of the tomtoms. It took him several miles into the bush, but he wormed his way through to where he could see by the light of a great fire a group of black creatures cavorting around it. And the chief figure in that circle, decked out with strings of human teeth and wisps of dyed hair, his body grotesquely smeared and painted with streaks of white and red clay, was Thomas Jefferson Quince, once more performing his incredible dance. To the beat of tomtoms and the rattle of bladders his naked figure twisted and contorted in a frenzy of movement. And a wail of crazy adoration went up from many throats at the spectacle of this demigod descended among them. Africa had taken Thomas Jefferson Quince back into its dark heart.

"'And you owe me a thousand dollars!' Kilmartin finally ended with a harsh laugh, and dropped down at the table, to reach again for the whiskey bottle while he regarded me with bloodshot and triumphant eyes.

"'Come back with us to the coast, and you shall have it,' I promptly agreed. But he only threw back his head with another laugh, tossed off his drink at a gulp, and then dropped into a somber reverie, his head planted in his hands. He was an abject and pitiable figure. Presently he slumped forward upon the table in a drunken doze. The man was done for.

"Captain Martin swore and shook his head and said we should have to get him away with us in the morning. His life wasn't worth sixpence if he went on in this fashion. It was only a question of days—perhaps hours—before the black arm would reach out of the bush and snatch him into oblivion.

"But in the morning all argument was useless. Kilmartin wouldn't budge. We could be off, as soon as we liked, and be damned to us. Thanks for a pleasant call. And in the end we were forced to leave him. We worked our way back to the river where the steamboat lay.

"We arrived about nightfall, to find that the current had carried the vessel aground, thanks to the stupid maneuvering of the half-breed who stoked the engine and who had been left in charge. Captain Martin was desperately anxious to get away from the place. We toiled until nearly midnight in getting that confounded boat clear of the mud bank on to which she had swung.

"And then a queer thing happened. A call came from the shore. We couldn't see in the darkness. Captain Martin feared an ambush, but we pushed off in the small boat to investigate. Presently we could make out a dark naked figure, gesticulating to us and then pointing repeatedly to an object at his feet. He beckoned urgently and indicated the inert thing he had brought to the river's edge. At last we understood, and came close. It was the insensible body of Kilmartin, which somehow that black had carried all the way through the bush. The nigger darted away at our approach, but I had an unforgettable glimpse of him as he disappeared, eluding the ray of my pocket-flashlight. A black and glistening body, adorned with dyed wisps of hair and human teeth, a face streaked with lines of white clay around the eyes and across the cheeks. It was Quince, and he had brought Kilmartin to us. Something had prompted him to drag that besotted, helpless white man to safety before the black arm out of the jungle should snatch.

"We got Kilmartin aboard, and were off. None too soon. Presently, without warning, the pursuit was upon us. A shower of arrows against the deckhouse, and screams of rage from the shore. We pushed well out into the middle of the stream, and the enemy, cheated of its prey, pursued us, winding like a snake through the matted forest that lined the shore, unable to reach us and strike. And again and again there would be those unearthly yells and the patter of arrows upon the deckhouse.

"They followed us the next day, screened by the vegetation on the riverbank, but seemingly always abreast of us. Once we caught a glimpse of spear heads moving above the bush. Captain Martin, who was studying the shore with a pair of binoculars, suddenly passed them over to me. 'Have a look,' he said briefly.

"I put the glasses to my eyes. I couldn't get the focus at first. Then out of a blur the shore suddenly leaped out at me. I almost started back, it was so close. I could see those spear heads moving along above the tops of the vegetation. One of them caught and held my eye, for there was a dark object impaled upon it and borne triumphantly aloft. It turned . . . and suddenly I recognized it—the head of Thomas Jefferson Quince. The eyes were closed and shrunken, but around their black emptiness were still those vivid lines of white clay. He had paid the penalty for delivering Kilmartin to us."

Blakeslee got up stiffly from his chair, and shook his head sadly. He went over to the window, and looked out upon the drab London afternoon. "And so we saved Kilmartin after all," he said simply. "Got him out of Africa. Got him back here."

"Here! . . ." I exclaimed.

"Yes, didn't I tell you? He's far from being himself yet. He's staying here with me—asleep just now, in the next room."

Blakeslee turned from the window and drew a deep breath. His little figure was suddenly rigid and impressive.

"Veneer!" he suddenly flung the word out at me, with intense emotion. "Do you remember? That was Kilmartin's favorite jibe. Civilization was nothing but a veneer. And to prove it he would show how Quince could be utterly stripped of it."

A gaunt figure, in bath-robe and slippers, was suddenly in the doorway, between the two rooms.

"Kilmartin!"

He looked at me for a long instant, without coming forward. "Has Blakeslee been telling you?"

"Yes, I've been telling him," Blakeslee answered from across the room. "Veneer!" he repeated.

Kilmartin's eyes darkened in his thin and wasted face. "Well, it is, isn't it? Civilization?" he countered with a show of his old-time defiance.

Blakeslee snorted. "You are alive today only because civilization is something deeper than veneer. Quince went savage, but did the veneer quite peel off? No, it didn't."

"Some of it still clung to him, yes," Kilmartin agreed. "That was the poor devil's tragic misfortune." He hesitated and turned to me. "Don't think I'm an ingrate because I'm arguing this point. Some of the veneer of civilization still stuck to the poor devil—and it cost him his life. That's what he has to thank civilization for. The veneer did for him, in the end."

"Did for him!" retorted Blakeslee. "Why, it made him transcendent! In spite of those strings of teeth and white-clayed face, he wasn't quite savage. Something still stirred in him that made him risk his life. He went out—inspired to a supreme act. Veneer, if you like. Thank God, we're covered with it."

BLUEBEARD

BY RUTH FITCH BARTLETT

WHO has not been a Bluebeard to himself,
Locked up one door and thrown the key away,
For fear of something hidden on a shelf
That he might find if he returned some day,
And, finding it, not bother any more
With what his friends were always running after,
Nor care if they did *mock him and deplore*
His loss to their security, their laughter?

Who has not hung his dreams with shining hair
Twisted to rafters of dark common sense,
And gone untroubled by the whole affair,
Or, punished only by indifference,
Making achievement bitter on his tongue,
Because he closed one door when he was young?

FLORIDA FRENZY

BY GERTRUDE MATHEWS SHELBY

THE smell of money in Florida, which attracts men as the smell of blood attracts a wild animal, became ripe and strong last spring. The whole United States began to catch whiffs of it. Pungent tales of immense quick wealth carried far.

"Let's drive down this summer when it's quiet," said canny people to one another in whispers, "and pick up some land cheap."

Concealing their destination from neighbors who might think them crazy, they climbed into the flivver, or big car, or truck, and stole rapidly down to Florida.

Once there, they found themselves in the midst of the mightiest and swiftest popular migration of history—a migration like the possessive pilgrimage of army ants or the seasonal flight of myriads of blackbirds. From everywhere came the land-seekers, the profit-seekers. Automobiles moved along the eighteen-foot-wide Dixie Highway, the main artery of East Coast traffic, in a dense, struggling stream. Immense busses bearing subdivision names rumbled down loaded with "prospects" from Mobile, Atlanta, Columbia, or from northern steamers discharging at Jacksonville. A broken-down truck one day stopped a friend of mine in a line. The license plates were from eighteen different states, from Massachusetts to Oregon. Most of the cars brimmed over with mother, father, grandmother, several children, and the dog, enticed by three years of insidious publicity about the miracles of Florida land values.

The first stories of the realty magicians had been disseminated through small city and country newspapers, particularly in the Middle West. Systematic propaganda stressed the undeniable fact that Florida was an unappreciated playground. Yet that was far less effective advertising than the beautiful, costly free balls given by one subdivision in certain cities. Those who attended shortly afterwards received a new invitation, to go without charge and view lots priced from one thousand dollars up.

Lured by the free trip, many went. Those who bought at the current prices and promptly resold made money. Other subdivisions met the competition, offsetting the overhead by arbitrary periodic raises in all lot prices. Whole states got the Florida habit. The big migration began.

Millions—variously estimated from three to ten—visited Florida last year, investing three hundred million dollars, and bank deposits swelled till they neared the half-billion mark in July.

The newcomers found themselves in a land where farming was practically at a standstill. Fresh vegetables were almost unobtainable; everybody uses canned goods. All food brought top New York prices. Railroads and steamships were inadequate to carry enough food, supplies, and passengers. For more than thirty days at midsummer an embargo was effective against building materials because a food famine (not the first) threatened. In September the prohibition extended to household goods, bottled drinks, and—chewing gum!

Many people not equipped for gypsying had to sleep in the open. Until, one

by one, the lower-priced hotels reopened, the overflow spent nights in railroad stations. Public utilities were overburdened. Electric light plants, insufficient last winter, were being enlarged and trying to run full tilt at the same time. Cooking was done by electricity; but lucky were those who had oil stoves and candles, for current was cut off without warning in certain towns for as much as twelve hours at a time. Antiquated telephones, cranked by hand, and overworked telegraph offices furnished little worthy the name of quick communication. Inundated post offices were bad enough. Worse was brackish artesian water. Worst of all were the recurrent ice famines. Ice plants also were being rebuilt. On a dozen days in our town no ice whatever was delivered. On several days none could be obtained without a physician's prescription, which entitled one to only fifteen cents' worth.

Florida was not to blame. She did her best. But no better prepared than San Francisco for the earthquake was Florida for that dramatic midsummer horde of dusty, trusting, hopeful pilgrims. Conditions are improving somewhat now: if the migration does not increase too greatly in volume people will be fed and housed somehow in midwinter.

II

Joining the great migration this summer, I went inclined to scoff. Were the others also confident that they possessed average good sense and were not likely to be fooled much?

Probably. I was lost. I gambled. I won. I remained to turn land salesman. Not only with no superiority, but with defiant shame rather than triumph, I confess—not brag—that on a piker's purchase I made in a month about $13,000. Not much, perhaps, but a lot to a little buyer on a little bet.

In June an old and trusted friend turned loose upon our family a colony of Florida boom bacilli. It was a year since I had heard from this particular friend. He was down and out, owing to domestic tragedy topped by financial reverses. Suddenly he bobbed up again rehabilitated, with $100,000 to his credit made in Florida since November, 1924. His associate made more than $600,000 in six months.

Had they been successful in 1923 in forming a $250,000 syndicate to buy the entire Florida part of the coast-wide canal, which included alternate sections of land in what is now a high-priced neighborhood, they would have been multi-millionaires. Failing to do this, they afterwards secured mere remnants of these lands at $22 an acre, selling promptly at an average of over $200. Now they wish they had had writer's cramp and had been unable to sign contracts of sale, for the same land is held at ten times the price at which they sold.

Not soon shall I forget the enchanted evening when this and varied other wonder-tales, later substantiated, were told in our quiet living room. Like finding buried treasure were the accounts of fortunes acquired by the big promoters, Fischer, Merrick, Roney, Young, and Davis. They have all sold sumptuous subdivisions for uncountable millions, in some cases before the land was improved, or drained, or even before there was any land at all. Davis at Tampa, and others at Miami, planted real estate in the bay, banked it in by sea walls, and starred shallow harbors with entirely artificial islands. Lavishly landscaped, their lots sold fast enough largely to finance such undertakings as they progressed. Fischer is credited with making Miami as much of a port as it is. Young has employed Goethals to create a real port of shallow Lake Mable—before there is any home industry to furnish return cargoes for ships. More impressive still—to me at least—were the fortunes made by small investors. A coast guard picked up ocean frontage for twenty-five cents an acre and sold for a million. A returning soldier exchanged with a buddy a good overcoat for a deed to ten worthless

acres near the beach, now valued at more than $25,000. A poor woman bought a lot in Miami in 1896 for $25 and sold this year for $150,000. One Ikey sadly took 1,200 acres on a debt ten years ago, couldn't sell at ten dollars, but recently received $1,200,000, a third of it in cash.

Remembering the painful slowness of saving, I was struck hard by the quick ease with which these fortunate people gained assurance against dependence. The boom bacillus entered my system. When our friend invited my husband and me to visit him in Florida in July we accepted.

"Take your money in a letter of credit, same as cash," he advised.

"We haven't any to invest," we answered honestly. But I scraped about, turning various assets into cash. When we started I carried a modest letter of credit.

We sailed from Philadelphia. On the boat I was amazed to find myself already a "prospect." Brokers on shipboard enviously assumed that our friend, like the usual land-octopus, had encircled wealthy prey in New York. A protectively inclined Philadelphian warned me in private, "Don't be drawn in. I wish I'd never seen Florida. It's a magnificent state. Money is to be made still. But speculation is hog-wild. People do things they'd never be guilty of at home. I've done them myself. I'm sewed up now in a company whose president, I've discovered, is a crook who failed at everything but bootlegging. If you enjoy a good night's sleep now, stay out." His protectorship was rather unflattering. Feeling superior, I thanked him. But when I landed at Miami I saw the significance of his warning. The whizzing pace of the people in tropical heat (for it *is* hot in Florida in summer—dripping hot) showed their frantic excitement. There was a sparkle in every eye, honest or dishonest. At the hotel, humming night as well as day with unwonted activity, a man in the next room took advantage of the after-midnight rates joyfully to long-distance New York.

"Momma! Momma! Is that you, Momma? This is Moe. Momma! I bought ten t'ousand acres to-day. Yes, ten t'ousand. Vat? Vat you say? Vy—momma! How should I tell you where that land iss? I don't know myself!"

When, in those first days as a prospect, I was rushed by motor car and boat all over the Gold Coast, that millionaire-jeweled strip seventy-two miles long and two to seven miles wide from Miami and Palm Beach, between the Everglades and the Ocean, I was confronted everywhere by evidences of boom hysteria. On a street corner a woman selected a choice lot from a beautiful plat shown her by a complete stranger and paid him fifteen hundred dollars in crumpled carefully hoarded bills. He gave her a receipt, but vanished. There was no land.

On two minutes' acquaintance disciplined men and women boiled over to totally unknown chance companions on purely personal matters. A corner policeman of whom I asked a casual question burst out, "My God, I wish I was out of this! My mother died yesterday in Chicago." The current excitement had undermined his usual self-control.

On one of the innumerable Florida busses, bumbling overbearingly down the blisteringly hot Dixie Highway toward Miami, my neighbor was a young woman of most refined appearance, an exceedingly pretty brunette in white crêpe de chine gown and hat. Only her handkerchief-edge hinted at mourning. As usual, the bus joggled loose all reserves.

"Florida? Wonderful! Came with a special party two weeks ago. Bought the third day. Invested everything. They guarantee I'll double by February. Madly absorbing place! My husband died three weeks ago. I nursed him over a year with cancer. Yet *I've actually forgotten I ever had a husband. And I loved him, too, at that!*" Values and customs are temporarily topsy-turvy in Florida.

III

What happens to Florida "sourdoughs" on arrival? Few come fortified with even the names of reliable firms. Notorious as well as honest promoters lie in wait for the gambling horde. Like wolves, they stir up the sheep, stampede them, allow them no time for recovery. They must decide instantaneously.

Again and again I declared that I had no intention to buy, but nobody let me forget for an instant I was a prospect. As upon others, the power of suggestion doubtless worked on me. It is subtly flattering to be the implied possessor of wealth. The kingdoms of the world appeared to be displayed for my choice. To help me choose, I, like everyone else, was accosted repeatedly on Miami streets, offered free dinners and bus trips, besides a deal of entertainment, conscious and unconscious, by high-pressure salesmen.

The boom bacillus thrives on prodigality. The price of good food brings many a prospect to the point of spending thousands. Two unusual concerns rewarded only real purchasers *post hoc*. One gave them an airplane ride, the other a free soft drink.

On account of an inherited notion of conduct towards those with whom one breaks bread, I refused all such bait. On my independent investigations salesmen found me unusually inquisitive. One, trying to sell me a $3500 lot, reproved me. "Those things don't matter. All Florida is good. What you are really buying is the bottom of the climate. Or the Gulf Stream. All you've got to do is to *get the rich consciousness*. There's the dotted line—you'll make a fortune."

Authentic quick-wealth tales, including innumerable lot transactions, multiplied astoundingly. They were not cases of twenty-five-dollar land proved worth one hundred dollars, but of prices which had pyramided high into the thousands. When I saw the sort of people who were making actual money my hesitation appeared ridiculous. I resolved to invest. I tried to assume an attitude of faith. I said aloud, indiscreetly, "Resisting enthusiasm and using intelligence—"

I was interrupted scornfully. "That's just it. The people who have made real fortunes check their brains before leaving home. Buy anywhere. You can't lose."

Those last three sentences, boom-slogans, were mainly true in 1924. But I for one refused to credit them in 1925. Clinging to such wits and caution as remained to me, that first week I studied the land itself from Miami to Fort Lauderdale, to Palm Beach, to Jupiter and Fort Pierce. Like everyone else I yearned to own a bit of the ocean rim. But shore acreage was held mainly in parcels priced at a million or worse. Beach lots for the little piker in good subdivisions cost now from $7000 to $75,000, according to location. Even on good terms that sort of thing was not for me. Biting off too much leads to acute financial indigestion. Perhaps I could find a doll-ranch—the traditional five acres with orange trees.

I searched. Some orchards still stand. Many have been mowed down by subdivisioners with an eye to front-foot prices. The fields, the wilderness, are side-walked and handsomely lamp-posted. The main ocean boulevard of the little city in which we were staying at the moment has not yet a sidewalk, yet checkerboards of cement, often approached through a showy archway, mark the strangely empty site of many a sold-out backwoods subdivision. The raw land is being laid out as if for an exposition. Surveyors' theodolytes are seen everywhere. Roadmaking is a great industry. The available supply of wood is used up for lot-stakes.

Yet houses, usually of hollow tile, pop out like the measles—they weren't there yesterday. Florida's table, I concluded, was being spread as rapidly as possible for an immense population, invited to occupy not only what it is believed will be a continuous pleasure city seventy-

two miles long between Palm Beach and Miami, but the entire state, with twenty-two million acres capable of development.

Searching continually for some deal to fit my modest purse, I found that the only ranch tracts priced within my reach were six or seven miles back in the Everglades. No Everglades for me, I decided, until reclamation is completed.

I then was offered by a reputable firm a great bargain in a city lot for $1000, an unusually low price. Well-located $3000 fifty-foot lots are rather scarce. This bonanza turned out to be a hole, a rockpit—and I reflected on the credulous millions who buy lots from plats without ever visiting the land!

But to set against this experience I had one of exactly the opposite sort which left me with a sharp sense of personal loss. An unimportant-looking lot several blocks from the center of Fort Lauderdale (whose population is fifteen thousand) on Las Olas Boulevard had been offered me about a week before at $60,000. I didn't consider it. It now resold for $75,000.

"It doesn't matter what the price is, if your location is where the buying is lively," I was told. "You get in and get out on the binder, or earnest money. If you had paid down $2500 you would have had thirty days after the abstract was satisfactorily completed and the title was approved before the first payment was due. You turn around quickly and sell your purchase-contract for a lump sum, or advance the price per acre as much as the market dictates. Arrange terms so that your resale will bring in sufficient cash to meet the first payment, to pay the usual commission, and if possible to double your outlay, or better. In addition you will have paper profits which figure perhaps several hundred per cent—even a thousand—on the amount you put into the pot. The next man assumes your obligation. You ride on his money. He passes the buck to somebody else if he can."

"But what happens if I can't resell?"

"You're out of luck unless you are prepared to dig up the required amount for the first payment. You don't get your binder back. But it's not so hazardous as it sounds, with the market in this condition."

Imagine how I felt two weeks later still when the same lot resold for $95,000. By risking $2500 with faith I could have made $35,000 clear, enough to live on some years. Terror of an insecure old age suddenly assumed exaggerated proportions. Right then and there I succumbed to the boom bacillus. I would gamble outright. The illusion of investment vanished.

IV

Like most pikers, at home I do not even play penny ante. Buying stocks on margin would never occur to me. Yet, like thousands of others, I suddenly became feverish to speculate.

Some sound truth and much complacent reasoning fortified me. This formerly unappreciated land was rather generally worth more than it cost. Who could tell where the exact level of true value now lay?

On this particular east-coast playground where the Gulf Stream modifies the winter, many millionaires with huge holdings, free from state income or inheritance taxes, find residence especially advantageous. Little fellows with only a sufficiency imitate them and buy homes under those wonderful skies. Hosts of visitors, I argued to myself, will always bask in winter-garden sunshine and bathe in welcoming waters tinted at some hours like liquid rainbows. Certain Newportlike areas will remain in high demand. Acreage or lot values on or near railroads and highways, even if a deflation comes, will maintain certain substantial values.

So I prayed for wisdom and searched for a "sleeper"—a piece still underpriced because its owner is not awake to current values. I would buy only high or "hammock" land, I said to myself, although my old prejudice against water-lots was laughed down. Where

you have to wade to reach sea-level, developers are miraculously transforming the mangrove swamps. Other states can't obtain dredges as usual. They are all busy on the Florida coast, digging ditches and cross-ditches that appear on subdivision plats as canals with romantic names. You see the sand-suckers dumping excavated material upon submerged land until it rises to the point where it may optimistically be called dry. The charm of the canals when planted with coconut or royal palms, with pink or scarlet hibiscus, and the astounding royal Poinciana, is undeniable. If you don't build too soon, the houses won't crack calamitously. Should your canals connect with a little river or the coastal waterway, your own little motor boat can ride at your landing. Judging by the advertisements, it is fashionable to keep gondolas, either single or mated.

But I didn't want to raise gondolas; I was hunting for a gamble which would bring large returns. I regretfully refused eight acres strategically placed in a magnificent new subdivision at $6500 per acre. I turned down two hundred feet of the Dixie Highway with an acre of land, not even in a town, at $25,000. I wanted good acreage at a low price. Yet miles west of the Dixie it was selling for many hundreds an acre. Practically no land near the highway was to be found at $1800, while east of the highway anything less than $3000 was regarded as a "good buy." Obviously, prices had reached the point where it took money to make money. That is why forming syndicates is such a popular sport to-day.

A letter glibly suggested, "Join an important group to operate in Florida properties in a big way. We have always made our members one hundred per cent or more. No one ever lost a penny through us." This mail-order method of making a fortune through totally unknown men is causing the postal authorities much work.

Some brokers on the ground manage syndicates honestly. One offered to take me in on the ground floor. But it entailed four years' risk—and it looked dangerous. One broker in Miami made three millions last year on a shoestring by means of five dummies. These were members of his syndicate who put up never-to-be-cashed checks. Three or four strangers were always taken in on the very basement floor to furnish all the actual cash. The broker gave them a profit that looked handsome to them, even if mostly paper. Not knowing prices and not seeing the books, they were never disturbed by the lion's share he retained.

I preferred to venture alone. For varying reasons, I found nothing suitable until a friend and broker recommended thirty-four and a half acres at $1750 an acre in the old city limits of a town I shall call Tarpon—a $60,000 purchase.

That did not make me gasp as it would have a few weeks before. We drove out to see it. Fort Lauderdale, now a miniature Miami, was as ragged a little town as Tarpon two years ago. Like small men loving to look tall, the tiniest towns have enlarged their boundaries to take in a whole township. The phrase "in city limits" is deceptive. The land didn't look like much, but then, little of it does. Just palmetto and pine—pine barrens. But it lay only a thousand feet from the populous Dixie and the important Florida East Coast Railway.

Florida is full of rumors, but I had a real tip that the Seaboard was going through probably somewhere in the rear of this property. The public announcement would make prices jump.

"It seems a good bet," I admitted. "It's town property. It looks like a 'sleeper.' Two things I'm not pleased with. This binder is for fifteen days only. And the corner nearest the road has negro cabins adjoining."

"Specify that the abstract is to be sent to the Blank Abstract Company," replied the broker. "It's so busy that

it will probably take six weeks anyhow to get a report. The negro cabins don't matter. Probably the city council will move them out. It's often done."

In spite of the small black cloud, I decided to bet on the Seaboard. Yet I got no thrill whatever the morning I paid my little capital for the binder, $2500. Rather, I was depressed. Although I signed the check with a flourish, I kissed the money good-by.

Shortly after, newspaper headlines verified our advance information about the Seaboard. I felt I was justified in raising the price. New facilities, new demand.

Our friend listed the land with reliable brokers. I was hopeful of an immediate offer. None came. Repeatedly word was brought that the black cloud scared prospects off. I grew more and more worried. The announcement that a race track was going in there further justified my price. Still there were no nibbles.

"Try raising the price," I was advised. "Usually the more you ask the better it sells." I did. I was unhappier than ever. What my would-be protector had said about sleeplessness was true.

The time came for us to return to New York. My husband, who behaved through all this adventure with exemplary, indulgent, modern discretion, had to leave. We decided that I must stay and see this Tarpon deal through. Kind neighbors put a new bee in my bonnet: "Why not sell lots yourself? You'd get ten per cent commission. Women as well as men make hundreds or thousands a week. One at H—— is said to have cleaned up $50,000 last winter. Find something you believe in and sell it."

It happened that I knew about the splendid engineering and town-planning of a new super-resort already under way. Without sore conscience I could sell that. The manager of a branch office invited me to join his sales-staff. My husband backed my decision and sailed without me.

V

Three days later, having obtained the necessary state, county, and city licenses to sell, I went to work. In Miami alone that same week twelve hundred such licenses were issued. Nearly everybody was selling land or acting (illegally, without license) as a bird-dog, on an understanding that he was to split the commission on any sale made to a person introduced. A taxi-driver, a tailor, a drug-store clerk, a telegraph operator, and an art student were licensed at the same time I was. None of them knew how to locate a piece of property from a legal description.

In spite of my confidence in our project, selling lots did not come easily to me. Never shall I forget my first day. I like people. I talk readily enough on appropriate occasions to strangers. But the moment it became to my mercenary advantage to do so, I was self-conscious and tongue-tied. I never mastered my deep repugnance; yet, determined not to prove a dud, I persisted.

Pursuing purchasers, I wore out numerous sets of plats. One reason selling was difficult is that while elsewhere it is possible to guess who has money, down there it is impossible. On the bus I sat between a wealthy looking elderly gentleman and an ill-clad, poverty-struck woman. They disagreed about Florida's virtues and were soon hurling retorts discourteous.

"'Tain't a boom at all. It's a *development*," she protested. "I been here six years. The values is just gettin' substantial. I got $300,000 in the bank to prove it." She waved a deposit book to bear out her statement.

"Law, I been coming here eighteen years," said the man. "There's been three booms. But I'm leaving soon's I can get a train back. I'm a house painter. Wages is good. There's plenty o' comfort for millionaires. But Mr. and Mrs. Working-man's gotta sleep up palm trees. They can't afford nothin' but scenery."

The lady failed to yield to my too-sudden persuasiveness. Another woman who took her seat presently, a supposed prospect, sang for half an hour the praises of a showy Spotless Town, a nearby subdivision. When she paused for breath, I inquired, "Tell me honestly: how high up on your house did last year's 'exceptional rains' come?"

She gulped. "Why—*over the floor.*"

I knew that the prospects of that subdivision had been penned up in the central hotel for days. Lake Okeechobee had been on such a rampage that even the Miami courthouse stood in a lake a foot deep. "Why then," I pressed, "do you believe so deeply in your subdivision?"

"Three years ago," said she, "I bought my house and lot for $8000. I could sell to-day for $25,000. I have a high-priced beach lot and a fine business site besides. Where else could I have done so well? Besides, streets are now being dug up to put in storm drainage."

But waterway engineers know that such filled land without a natural slope below Lake Okeechobee must be leveed at the back, and that "storm drainage" often fails in the rainy season. Ultimate holders of this particular property may find themselves marooned on their second stories before the State finishes the reclamation of the Everglades. Honest subdivision men must dyke off the Everglades, to keep out even occasional floods. Save for hummocks and the coastal rim, much of this high-priced land lies in the Glades basin, whose muck soil is covered at wet seasons, in spite of the present drainage canals.

As I went about, to offices, private homes, hotels, I found many people who intended to stay in Florida, who had come because they revolted against city life and longed for a chance to enjoy their leisure out of doors, free from congestion and economic pressure; yet plainly the gamblers preponderated. This sort of speculation is far more demoralizing than the Stock Exchange, for it exploits fine deep instincts: love of home and love of land, the longing for security. The Exchange doesn't uproot thousands of families. There are recognized codes of procedure in Wall Street, whereas all rules are in abeyance in that too-speedy land-game, even the simple elemental honesty of keeping your word.

"That's the sixth binder I've had returned this week," complained the buyer for a syndicate. "Brokers can't deliver if owners don't keep promises to sell at the price set. They told me that when they presented my check the owners hastily excused themselves with 'Oh, I've taken that off the market.' But it was on again in five minutes at an advanced price. All I've done is to help them boost what they own. Now, can you positively deliver these lots?"

I boasted that our development always delivered what it sold. That noon a man and woman, arguing violently, stopped just an instant before the office window. As they were turning away I overtook them, offering information.

The man, in a nervous hurry, said they weren't interested. The little lady contradicted maritally. Had I any business lots on the Dixie or ocean boulevard property? When I pointed out a resale, one hundred feet prominently located on the grand boulevard, she was deeply interested. On the way to Miami, they had only stopped off to get a cold drink.

Directing her to a soda fountain, I dashed back to the office, secured another interesting "buy" and, overtaking them, presented it. I mailed a marked plat that night. Next noon they drove up again to the office, and we went on up the Dixie to the property. Well pleased with the two lots I had chosen, she returned to the office to close. This was not a direct resale, but a listing from a broker near Palm Beach. They put a binder on the bargain and left, supposedly the proud possessors of two fine lots. And my commission was a thousand dollars.

But here we struck the same old snag. We wired the broker the lots were sold.

The broker replied, "Price raised $1200 on Dixie lot, $1000 on other."

Our sales manager was furious. Not only do lot-owners often use brokers merely as price-raisers, but often the broker himself, sure of a sale, buys at the owner's price and demands an advance. Whoever raised the price—and I suspect it was the broker—how, if our prospects met this raise, could we be sure the lots would be delivered at the new price? The manager directed me to advise my purchasers that we had a good choice of other lots and counsel them to drop the first two.

The little lady was terribly disappointed and obstinately determined to have none of the attractive first-sale lots that I went clear to Miami to show her. The latter were all west of the Dixie. She declared she would not buy there. She urged me to make every effort to get those resales for her at some compromise price.

"Did you ever keep chickens?" I remember some one asking me about this time. "The land rush is similar. Put down in the henyard a pan full of big scraps. The hens come running. The first of them grab big pieces and depart hastily for the back-country. The others see the pieces in their beaks and, instead of realizing there's plenty more in the pan, they chase the hens who got the first pieces and snatch part of their dinners. That's resale psychology."

Luckily, I finally came to a compromise agreement with the broker. My prospects were to start north next day. We drove direct to the broker. Yet, to close that sale at all and eliminate all chance of the broker double-crossing either my prospects or me, it became necessary to go through a worse midnight ride than Paul Revere's down the speed-mad, narrow, dangerous Dixie to get the sales manager's acquiescence to the broker's terms. But the sale was consummated next day.

At this time I had fresh proof that brokers were working to sell the thirty-four and a half acres I myself owned at Tarpon. A strange salesman approached me in a soda fountain and tried to sell me my own property. And one morning that Tarpon deal went through in just fifteen minutes. I signed a contract at a price which netted $3300 in cash for me, a $3880 commission for the broker and $10,000 in one, two and three year notes. Of course there is United States currency and Florida money. Most pieces of land turn over many times. A jungle of paper, notes, liens, or mortgages—not merely first and second but third, fourth, even seventh and eighth—may surround a title. So far, a bank president assured, it's all good, and bears the eight per cent interest customary down there. But a possible deflation might make it look more like I O U's than established security. "Count only your cash at face value," advised a friend to whom booms are an old story.

It sets one up to succeed. Everybody congratulated me. Once again I became a prospect. Everyone had a bargain to sell me. I hugely enjoyed this role now, for I was recovering from the boom fever. After my experience I knew much better how to resist. I had my neat profit, my commissions, and a rich experience for so short a time. I had seen dangers invisible to the eye of newcomers. I was satisfied with my adventure.

VI

I had returned from Florida and had written the above account of my thirteen-thousand-dollar profit, when a telegram from my purchaser shocked me: "Deal off. Title defective."

That thirteen thousand vanished in thin air. Presumably any defect that let him out would also protect me. His explanatory letter showed that this particular land had recently been sold nine times. In each case there was a contract of sale for a different amount. The one, two and three year payments were of different dates. Each buyer held paper drawing eight per cent. There were nine mortgages on this property.

The tenth purchaser must have money to protect himself against them all.

In addition, a woman who had once owned part of this piece had died without an administrator. To get one appointed and to clear up the title so that development might safely proceed would take at least many months.

I was taking steps to recover our binder when a broker who never knew I had sold the property brought an offer of $3500 an acre, or $120,000 for our $60,000 purchase, held on only $2500 binder. Counting only cash profits, I stood to clear $20,000 immediately. The commission would have to be deducted from this, but it would leave me a plump check for nearly three times what I had expected to cash out of the canceled deal. In addition I should have $40,000 of Florida paper, worth whatever time and fate decree.

Had the new buyer definite assurance concerning the Seaboard's right of way which prompted this extravagant offer? Or had Tarpon property values jumped this much in two weeks? Neither could affect my reply: "Will not resell if title questionable. Get binder back."

To come out whole was clearly more than I deserved. I was following a perilous path. Non-marketable titles or the loss of binders are not uncommon. The Florida boast that no money has been lost anywhere is fiction. My experience has led me to agree heartily with Stanley N. Shaw who, predicting in the Standard Daily Trade Service a prosperous future for Florida, emphatically warns investors: "In this phase of the boom further amateur speculation is dangerous."

The thing that counts, it should be remembered, is not what the broker or salesman says but what the contract specifies. Furthermore, "the marking-up of realty values to fantastic levels in many sections" (I quote Mr. Shaw) "requires trained, accurate judgment on the ground to purchase with necessary discrimination and to negotiate a well-termed properly timed sale. When prices and practices were normal, the margin for gambling on resales, considering the pressing demand for land, was amply wide. Amateurs had exceptional chances. Prices are now artificial, although the boom has not run its course. Quite outside the naturally numerous frauds, buyers require highly expert protection from various ordinary practices. Instead of ten per cent to twenty per cent down, with four years to pay the balance, the proportion of cash-down demanded and shortened period to complete payments usually leaves only narrow margin and brief time in which profitably to make resales."

"How long is the boom going to last?" I asked perhaps a hundred people, of whom ninety had come to Florida last November or later.

"Oh, four or five years," was the universal answer.

"You're going to live here then?"

Usually they answered in a whisper: "No, we're getting out next winter."

A lot of people thinking alike make a boom—and likewise break it. In my judgment the Florida boom has many months at least to run. The whole state has violent boom hysterics. Already there have been lulls in significant spots, but they have proved only sloughs between successive price waves gathering to crests in Miami and traveling farther and farther up state before breaking. West Coast prices now rival those of the East. Waterfront lots in Lake County run close behind Gulf and Coast frontage. The big fellows are still making money. But I have never seen prosperity as nervous as that of Florida. When a bear market begins, and the migration of land-gamblers from the North is checked, by what means will the realty market be sustained? Can values be stabilized without letting the blood of millions?

ON LEAVING GUIDE BOOKS AT HOME

BY H. M. TOMLINSON

MY first attempt to read at sea was a dreary failure. Yet how I desired a way to salvation! We were over the Dogger Bank. It was midwinter. It was my first experience of deep water. A sailor would not call twenty fathoms deep water—I know that now; yet if you suppose the North Sea is not the real thing when your ship is a trawler, and the time is Christmas, then do not go to find out. Do not look for the pleasure of travel in that form.

That morning, hanging to the guide-rope of a perpendicular ladder, and twice thrown off to dangle free in a ship which seemed to be turning over, I mounted to watch the coming of the sun. It was a moment of stark revelation, and I was shocked by it. I could see I was alone with my planet. We faced each other. The size of my own globe—the coldness of its grandeur—the ease with which swinging shadows lifted us out of a lower twilight to glimpse the dawn, an arc of sun across whose bright face black shapes were moving, and then plunged us into gloom again—its daunting indifference! Where was God? No friend was there. There were ourselves and luck. That night a great gale blew.

So I tried Omar Khayyam, which was an act of folly. I could not resign myself even to the ship's Bible, the only other book aboard. Any printed matter is irrelevant when life is acutely conscious of itself and is aware, without the nudge of poetry, of its fragility and briefness. I tried to read the Christmas number of a magazine, but that was worse than noughts and crosses. "You come into the wheel-house," said the mate, "and stand the middle watch with me. It's all right when you face it." In the still seclusion of the wheel-house after midnight, where the sharpest sound was the occasional abrupt clatter of the rudder chains in their pipes, where the loosened stars shot across the windows and back again, where the faint glow of the binnacle lamp showed, for me, but my companion's priestly face, and where chaos occasionally hissed and crashed on our walls, I found what books could not give me. The mate sometimes mumbled, or put his face close to the glass to peer ahead. They had a youngster one voyage, he told me, who was put aboard another trawler, going home. The youngster was ill. That night it blew like hell out of the northwest. In the morning, so the hands advised the mate, "the youngster's bunk had been slept in, so they said the other trawler would never get to port, and she didn't." I listened to the mate and the sweep of the waves. The ship trembled when we were struck. But it seemed to me that all was well, though I don't know why. What has reason to do with it? Is the sea rational?

After that voyage there were others, and sometimes a desert of time to give to books. Yet if to-night we were crossing the Bay, going out, and she was a wet ship, I should have a dim reminder of the sensations of my first voyage, and much prefer the voice of a shipmate to a book. The books then would not be out of the trunk. They would do well where they were, for a time. The first week, uncertain and strange, the ship

unfamiliar and not at all like the good ships you used to know so well; her company not yet a community, and the "old man" annoyed with his owners, his men, his coal, and his mistaken choice of a profession—the first week never sees the barometer set fair for reading. Some minds indeed will never hold tight to a book when at sea. Mine will not. What is literature when you have a trade wind behind you? I have tried a classical author then, but it was easier to keep the eye on the quivering light from the seas reflected on the bright wall of my cabin. It might have been the very spirit of life dancing in my own little place. It was joyous.

But recently there was an attempt—the time being spring—to cut out the dead books from my shelves, the books in which there was no longer any sign of my life. Then I took that classical author, rejected one memorable voyage, and looked at his covers. When he was on the ship with me I found him meager and incommunicative. Something has happened to him in the meantime, however. He is all right now. His covers, I notice, have been nibbled by exotic cockroaches, and their cryptic message adds a value to the classic which I find new and good. Scattered on the floor, too, I see a number of guide books. They are soiled. They are ragged. Their maps are hanging out. When I really needed them I was shy of being seen in their company, and they were left in the ship's cabin during the day, or in the hotel bedroom. The maps and plans were studied; sometimes they were torn out of a book and pocketed. I could never find the courage to walk about Rome or Palermo with a *Baedeker*. It always seemed to me like the wearing of a little Union Jack or the Stars and Stripes on the coat collar.

Those guide books were most interesting on the wet days of a journey, when it was impossible, or undesirable, to go roaming. They were full of descriptions of those things one must on no account overlook when in a country.

Once, when hunting near Syracuse for "the famous *Latonie*, or stone quarries, in certain of which the Athenian prisoners were confined," and several of whom were spared, so the book said, because they could repeat choruses of Euripides, I met a cheerful goatherd, an old man, with a newly fallen kid under his arm, who told me, in an American language so modern that I hardly knew it, that he used to sell peanuts in Chicago. He did not repeat choruses from Euripides, but even the great dramatist, I am sure, would have been surprised by the fables of the peanut merchant. I forgot the quarries while listening to them. The fabulist and I sat with our backs against a boulder over which leaned an olive tree. The goats stood around and stared at us; and not, I believe, without some understanding of their master's stories.

I am reminded of this because a map of southeastern Sicily is hanging out of a book, the banner of a red-letter day. I rescued the volume from the mass of discarded lumber, and found that inside the cover of the book I had drawn a plan of the harbor of Tunis. Why? I've forgotten the reason. But I remember Tunis, for I had been drawn thither by this very book, which had said that nobody should leave the Mediterranean without seeing Tunis. There it was, one day. From the deck of my French ship I saw electric trams and the familiar *hôtels des étrangers*. A galley with pirates at its sweeps was pulling almost alongside us, and desperately I hailed it, threw in my bag, and directed them to take me to a steamer flying the Italian flag, for that steamer, clearly enough, was leaving Tunis at once. That was the ship for me. There was some difficulty with the dark ruffians who manned the galley who followed me aboard the steamer. There they closed round me, a motley and savage crew. They demanded gold in some quantity, and with menacing flourishes, shattering voices, and hot eager eyes. Their leader was a huge negro in a white robe

and a turban, whose expressive gargoyle, with a loose red gash across its lower part, had been pitted by smallpox. I did not like the look of him. He towered over me, and leaned down to bring his ferocity closer to my face. Some Italian sailors stopped to watch the scene, and I thought they were pitying this Englishman. But the latter was weary of Roman ruins, of hotels, of other thoughtful provision for strangers, surprising in its open and obvious accessibility, and of guides and thieves—especially of thieves, shameless, insatiable, and arrogant in their demands for doing nothing whatever. At first he had paid them, for he was a weak and silly stranger who did not know the land; but now, sick of it all, he turned wearily on that black and threatening gargoyle while it was still in full spate of Arabic, shook his fist at it, and cried suddenly what chief mates bawl when things are in a desperate plight and constraint is useless. To his astonishment and relief the negro stepped back, turned to his crew and said to them sadly, in plain English, "Come on, it's no bloody good." The gang left that ship as modestly as carol singers who find they have been chanting "Christians Awake" to an empty house. Now, evidently guide books cannot lead you to such pleasing interludes, and may even beguile you away from them.

I mean that the books cannot guide you to those best rewards for travel, unless, of course, they are old and stained. They are full then of interesting addenda of which their editors know nothing, and of symbols with an import only one traveler may read. So when the days come in which, as guide books, they will not be wanted, you may read in them what is not there.

This very guide book to the Mediterranean, for example, under the heading of "Oran," describes it as "the capital of a province, military division, sixty thousand inhabitants. It is not certain that Oran existed in the time of the Romans." Some people would like us to believe that no place on earth can be of much interest unless the Romans once flattened it into meekness. But we have heard far too much of these Romans. They bore us. To-day we call them captains of industry and company promoters. Oran, or what I could see of it in the dark when we arrived, was as rich in promise as though it were thoroughly impeded with classical ruins. There were lights that were a concourse of planets, and as I lay reading in my bunk the ship was so quiet that you could hear the paint crack on a bulkhead rivet. I was reading this very guide book then, and it told me that beyond those calm and mysterious planets were Tlemcen, and Ein Sefra, "an oasis one thousand one hundred and ten meters above the sea-level belonging to the Duled Sidi Sheikh. Here one catches a glimpse of the Algerian desert, which is the fringe of the Great Sahara."

No; such books when you are home again are as good as great literature. One dare not discard the gold of those hours. What would be left to us? There, for another instance, is Baedeker's *Switzerland*. Now the truth is, that book, bought for the first journey to the Alps, was among the things I forgot to pack. It was never missed. It is only to-day that we find it is indispensable. For it was bought in the winter of 1913. Again it was night when we arrived. A sleigh met us, and took us noiselessly into the vaguely white unknown. Pontresina is a good name. In the morning there were the shutters of a bedroom to be opened, and a child who was with me gazed with wide eyes when the morning light discovered to him a field of ice poised etherially on clouds, though the night had not gone from the valley below us; above the ice was a tincture of rose on far peaks. Is it likely that he will forget it? Or I? In any case, there is a diorama of those peaks in that guide book, and what rosy light is absent from that picture we can give to it.

Religion and Life

CONCERNING PRAYER

BY HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

PERSONAL religion is drawn like an ellipse around two foci: communion with God and service to man. The second involves problems varied and difficult, from casual individual relationships to the League of Nations, but, after all, the underlying principle of human service is easy to see. Communion with God, however, alike in principle and practice, is for many a perplexing matter, and even among professing Christians prayer is often a confused problem or a formal observance rather than a sustaining help.

The effect of this upon vital religion must be serious, for prayer, when it is real, is the innermost way in which any one who believes in God makes earnest business of his faith. It is possible to believe in God as the man upon the street believes in the Rings of Saturn. His confidence in their existence, while he supposes it to be well founded, is second-hand and the evidence, were he to state it, would be confused and unconvincing and, anyway, he does not propose to do anything about them or because of them. That multitudes believe in God with similar inconsequence is clear. On the whole they agree with Napoleon that somebody must have made the constellations. They may have poetic hours congenial to faith in God when like Walt Whitman they walk out into the mystical, moist night air and from time to time look up in perfect silence at the stars. Perhaps they take occasional excursions into philosophy and return vaguely convinced that for some reason or other mechanistic naturalism will not work, that it is too simple to explain this vast, evolving universe, and that God, or something like him, must be at the heart of creation. Or perhaps they are natural traditionalists and stick to faith in God against all comers because they were taught it by their fathers before them.

There are many ways in which an inoperative faith in God, without effective influence on the one who holds it, may thus exist in multitudes of minds and give the impression of widespread religion. But that is not religion. Religion has not arrived until faith in God has been translated into action, and the most intimate and inward action which emerges when faith in God is real is prayer. That is the soul getting into contact with the God in whom it believes. That is man's spirit making earnest with its confidence that it comes from Spirit and can hold communion with him. As Professor William James put it, a man dealing with his own inward life at its best "becomes conscious that this higher part is coterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck." A man who has no more faith than a grain of mustard seed but who makes that use of it is much more essentially religious

than a prayerless philosopher who can argue the whole case for theism from Dan to Beersheba.

THERE are many obstacles which commonly inhibit this adventure of the soul in praying, most of which are not philosophical but intimately personal. People, for example, do not commonly begin to pray (however much they say prayers) until they rather desperately need to. An English friend who was in the thick of the bad business on the Flanders front tells me that one night behind the lines he had to listen to an astronomer sent out by the British War Office to tell the men about the stars, their constellations, and relative positions, so that soldiers lost at night might guide themselves by the heavens. My friend was frankly bored. Astronomy seemed to him an alien and abstruse affair with no bearing on the mud and death with which they were concerned. One night, however, reconnoitering in No Man's Land, his men were discovered by the enemy, were fired upon, became confused, ran at random, lay down, and then tried to creep home. But where was home? Then my friend remembered the stars. He desperately needed them. In dismay he saw by means of them that his men had been creeping toward the enemy. The stars, he says, were very real to him that night when he got his last man safely back.

Reality in praying is commonly subject to the same condition of urgent need. Communion with God, which through many years has seemed a pious superfluity, may suddenly become a real necessity. A man discovers what all wise men sometime must discover, that life is not simply effort, output, attack, the aggressive impact of oneself upon the world. He finds that strong living is impossible without inward resources to fall back upon. Like a closely beleaguered city of the olden time, he is undone unless he can discover a fountain of living water somewhere within him. Then he may light upon the secret of prayer. The transformation wrought in those who do is often marvelous. They do more than believe in God. They actually achieve contact with the MORE, in a real fashion get on board of it and save themselves.

THERE are some who are fortunate enough to reach this experience before desperate crisis drives them to it. They recognize before they are whipped into seeing it that the destinies of personality lie in the world within rather than in the world without. That, after all, is the insight essential to real praying, and because this generation in the Western world largely lacks it and is obsessed with the external universe and what can be done with that, prayer has become unreal to multitudes.

For prayer is a poor reliance if one is mainly intent on managing the external world. That is not the realm where praying operates. Prayer will not alter the weather nor harness the latent powers of the universe to drive our cars and light our houses; and so long as the major interest of men is centered in an area where prayer is not effective, it is bound to be neglected and to seem unreal.

This practical obsession of our time in mastering the external forces to do our bidding—as though wealth and worth in human living were attainable by that chiefly or alone—is responsible for more than the decline of prayer. All spiritual values suffer. The American who remarked that Chicago had not yet had time for culture but that when she did get around to it she would make it hum, was characteristically modern. Yet, after all, culture cannot be made to hum. It rises out of deep fountains in the soul of a generation. It is begotten of the Spirit in the hearts and minds of those who love loveliness; and art, music, literature, drama, education, as well as religion, will lag, falter, give ugliness instead of beauty, until we learn once more the ancient lesson that the world without is but the setting for the world within, where humanity's real fortunes lie.

We are fooled by obviousness and size. The world without has visibility, dimension, measurement. The world within is unseen, impalpable. That deceives us. We think the big is marvelous. Athens was less than half the size of Buffalo, but Athens at her best did care about the world within. Seers like Plato taught the people that one real world alone exists, the inner world of ideas and ideals, of which the outer world is but the shadow; and Athens left to history a spiritual heritage unexhausted yet.

Palestine is smaller than Vermont, but at her best Palestine cared about the inner world, from Psalmists who sang, "All that is within me, bless his holy name," to him who said, "The kingdom of God is within you," and we still are spiritual pensioners upon that little place we call the Holy Land. In the long run this is the kind of greatness that mankind cares most to remember. We crucially need a revival of it in our generation. And when that comes, prayer will come back again. For prayer in its true meanings is one of the great indispensables of a rich and fruitful inner life.

WHILE it is true, however, that the inhibitions which keep people from effective praying are more likely to be personal and practical than philosophical, the intellectual difficulties are real. Most children with a devout religious background are taught to pray to a very human God. Their imaginations of him are naïve and picturesque. "Has God a skin?" I was asked by a six-year-old. When in surprise I denied the gross suggestion, she broke into laughter and her explanation of her merriment was ready on demand, "to think how funny God must look without one!" Almost all children who think of God at all begin with some such naïve anthropomorphism. Even in our adult hymns and prayers the old imagery of a flat earth with an encircling heaven still is kept for poetic purposes and God is addressed as though he were a few miles above us in the sky. This picturesque trellis for the religious imagination to train itself upon easily becomes part of the child's working idea of life. God is thought of as an individual, picturable in some form or other, whose major dwelling is the sky. Sometimes the pictures are very crude; sometimes the imagination soars, as with one lad of five who on his first sight of the starlit sky saw the figure of Deity clearly outlined in the constellations.

To a God so concretely conceived the child begins to pray. He asks for anything he wants. He tries experiments in achieving his purposes by request and checks up his apparent successes and his failures. On into adolescence with varying degrees of earnestness this habit of praying often goes accompanied by an idea of God which, gradually sublimated and exalted, loses its grosser features, but which still retains its picture of Deity off somewhere who mysteriously hears us when we cry.

Then comes the crash. The youth is introduced into a vivid understanding of our new universe with its unimaginable distances and its reign of law. The habitation above us where the gods once dwelt is demolished utterly; we look clean through it into abysmal space. On the bewildered imagination, robbed of its old frameworks and supports, the truth dawns that the anthropomorphic God long believed and prayed to never made Betelgeuse and Antares, that this universe is too vast to have been created in the first place or sustained now by the Deity of childhood's imagination. The youth's prayers begin to ring hollow. He has lost his old imagination of the God to whom he prays. He finds himself talking into vacancy. For him there is no longer any God there, or a God grown so vague and misty that prayer directed to him is a travesty upon the word.

For many people this is the end of praying save in some crisis when they pray instinctively as they might do any irrational and hectic thing. Others, how-

ever, having found real value in the habit, refuse to surrender so easily a cherished help. They shift their basis. They leave God largely out of the matter and interpret praying as self-communion. They retreat into their own souls and exercise themselves in meditation and aspiration. They encourage the ascendency of their own spiritual life by maintaining seasons of quiet and receptivity when they are hospitably open-doored to the highest that they know. They do find help. But often, when the need is urgent and the crisis sharp, they are oppressed by the isolation in which their self-communion is carried on. Their performance becomes attempted self-hypnotism. They are not tapping hidden resources of Spirit; they are going through spiritual gymnastic exercises to increase their own muscle. They miss the Great Companion of their early prayers. At least they wish that they could obey the injunction of Epictetus the Stoic: "When you have shut the doors and made a darkness within, remember never to say that you are alone; for you are not alone, but God is within."

Between these two false ideas of prayer —clamorous petition to an anthropomorphic God, and the inward endeavor to lift oneself by one's own bootstraps— multitudes are to-day uncertain and dissatisfied. Yet the way out is not difficult. Prayer is not crying to a mysterious individual off somewhere; prayer is not bouncing the ball of one's own aspiration against the wall of one's own soul and catching it again; true prayer is fulfilling one of the major laws of the spiritual world and getting the appropriate consequences.

Just as around our bodies is the physical universe, in dependence upon which we live so that we create no power of our own, but assimilate it—eat it, drink it, absorb it—so around our spirits and in them is the Spiritual Universe. It is really there and it is as law-abiding as the physical cosmos with which the scientist deals. True prayer is fulfilling the conditions of our relationship with this Spiritual World. We cannot create inward power any more than we create our physical strength. We assimilate it. We fulfil the laws of its reception and it comes. So Spirit, which is God, surrounds our lives, impinges on them, is the condition of their existence, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." To see the truth of this is to believe in God; to pray is to make earnest with it and avail ourselves of the resources of strength waiting for those who fulfil the conditions and get the results.

Such an approach to prayer, as the fulfilling of spiritual law in one's relationship with God, is bringing back the intelligent and fruitful practice of it to many who thought that they had lost it altogether. Such an approach saves us from the pious blasphemy of telling God what we think he should do, or reminding him of gifts to be bestowed which he unhappily would otherwise forget. Such an approach saves us from the futile and dangerous extension of prayer to realms where it does not belong, as though praying, which is a law of the inner world of personal life and is demonstrably effective there, could be relied on to accomplish results beyond its own realm. Such an approach saves us also from the loneliness of mere self-communion, for prayer is no more that than eating and drinking are; like them, praying is receptive fellowship with a real world by which we are surrounded and of which we are a part.

Nor does this view rob God of personal meaning, as though he were blind energy alone. To be sure, God cannot be an individual to whom we cry. The clinging garments of anthropomorphism will long clothe our poetic language about God and, like the words "sunrise" and "sunset," carry over into a new day the imagery of an outgrown world-view. But there is no safety for religious faith among the intelligent until it is plainly recognized that the old astronomy has really gone and with it the old god of a local habitation conceived in picturesque and individual terms. What we are

manifestly dealing with is a vital universe surcharged with Creative Power. Unless we surrender to mechanistic naturalism, we cannot think of that Power in physical terms alone. That Power has issued in spiritual life and in terms of spiritual life must be interpreted. There is more than a *push* in this orderly and evolving universe, as though it were being heaved up from below by blind forces; there is a *pull* also, as though ends were in view and goals being achieved. That far philosophy can go; religion goes farther. It commits itself to this Power in terms of friendship and goodwill. It approaches the thought of him by way of the best we know. It says with Lowell:

"God is in all that liberates and lifts,
In all that humbles, sweetens, and consoles."

It finds God, not primarily without, but within, rising inwardly as Jesus described it, like a living fountain. It trusts the Spirit by whom our spirits are inspired, and enters into conscious fellowship with him. That is prayer. At its best it dispenses with words and postures and becomes silent companionship with the Unseen. At its finest it ceases clamorous petition and becomes affirmation—the soul inwardly appropriating its heritage of fellowship with the Highest and growing rich thereby.

Such prayer is not contrary to law; it is the fulfilling of law. Those who faithfully meet such inward conditions of spiritual life find poise, perspective, power, achieve personalities balanced and unified, build characters magnanimous toward others and within themselves conscious of deep resources and reserves. Even Tyndall, the scientist, who notoriously denied what most Christians of his time thought about prayer, said, "It is not my habit of mind to think otherwise than solemnly of the feelings which prompt to prayer. Often unreasonable, even contemptible, in its purer forms prayer hints at disciplines which few of us can neglect without moral loss."

CHRISTMAS EVE

BY WALTER DE LA MARE

DARK is the hour, long the night;
Hoarfrost sheds a shimmering light;
The wind in the naked woodland cries
A harplike music; the willow sighs.
But a marvelous quiet dwells in heaven—
Sirius, Markab, the faithful Seven—
For the Old Year's sands are well-nigh run;
This is the Birthday of the Sun.

No glint of dawn; but Chanticlere
Is crowing of Christmas, bugle clear.
In waxen hive, close-wintering,
Bees a slumbrous orison sing;
Roused from their lair in dales of the snow,
Light-foot deer in procession go;
Cattle and sheep in byre and pen
Kneel in the darkness, unseen of men:
For the Old Year's sands are well-nigh run;
This is the Birthday of the Sun.

Now houses of humans with jargonings ring,
Hautboy and serpent and flute and string,
Voices in gruff-shrill carolling—
Men and boys hunched up in the cold.
Tinkles the ice on the frozen mould.
Hesper is shining—rime on thatch;
Stag-borne Nicholas comes—unlatch!
Children stir in their dream and then
Drowsily sigh and turn over again.
Airs of the morn in the orchard flow;
Lo, in the apple boughs, mistletoe!
For the Old Year's sands are well-nigh run;
This is the Birthday of the Sun.

Master and Man, the East burns red;
Drowse no longer in sluggard bed;
Garland the Yule log; scatter the wheat—
Feast for the starving birds to eat.
Mistress and maid, wax warm you shall—
Boar in oven, burned wine, spiced ale,
There's quiring in heaven; and Gabriel
Wings from the zenith his news to tell;
Shepherd and king fare forth again—
Peace on earth, goodwill to men—
For, loving and lovely, in manger laid,
Dreams o'er her Babe the Virgin Maid.
Kindle then candles for your soul;
Shake off the net life's follies bring;
Ev'n of the innocent death takes toll;
There is an end to wandering.
But see, in cold clod the snowdrop blows;
Spring's inexhaustible fountain flows;
Love bides in earth till time is done;
The Old Year's sands are well-nigh run;
This is the Birthday of the Sun.

ENGLAND'S FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM

THE CHRONIC DISEASE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

BY A. G. GARDINER

THE fifth successive black winter of British industry has set in. For five years the cloud of unemployment has darkened our sky. It darkens it still, and the visible horizon of things offers small promise of change. That the change will come is the belief of all competent observers, for confidence in the resources and capacity of the country is unabated; but we have ceased to entertain extravagant hopes of the immediate future. The ordeal through which the country is passing is unprecedented, and it is probable that before we emerge from it the whole social structure will have undergone profound and far-reaching changes. Indeed, those changes are taking place visibly and rapidly, under the urgent pressure of the overshadowing disease of unemployment. Relentless as war, insidious as revolution, that disease passes through the land, leaving in its wake a lowered physique, a shattered morale, an embitterment of social relations, and a mass of problems more grave and more complex than any with which British statesmanship has ever been confronted in the past.

A great fear is abroad, like the fear of plague or famine. It is our share of the ravages of the war. Other nations have their devastated areas, we have our devastated industries; and while devastated areas can be restored, we have yet to find that our devastated industries can be revived. Among the shipyards on the Clyde and the Tyne, the foundries of Sheffield, the factories of Leeds and Nottingham, the catastrophe has left its traces as surely as, and perhaps more enduringly than, it has on the battlefields of Flanders.

This is the key to our post-war history. Unemployment dominates all our politics. It governs both our internal and our external policy. Two governments have fallen on issues connected with unemployment. The fate of a third still hangs in the balance. It will stand or fall according to its success or failure in lifting the cloud that overspreads industry. Unemployment is the unknown quantity in every political equation. Its index is the barometer of ministries. If it falls, they are in the ascendant. If it rises, their doom is sealed.

II

What then is the nature of this disease?

Before the war it can scarcely have been said to have existed. Here as elsewhere there were recurrent spells of severe unemployment. The problems associated with it engaged the earnest attention of social reformers, economists and politicians alike. But no one regarded them as other than exceptional. They were merely periodic or seasonal disorders which came and went and were not beyond the skill of statesmanship to cope with. No one conceived a state of severe unemployment as chronic. No one questioned our capacity in normal times to provide work for all the inhabitants of these islands. In normal years the index of unemployment fluctuated between four and five per cent of all

occupied persons and even in the worst years it never rose above ten per cent. And with the war unemployment disappeared almost completely. There were a few weeks of uncertainty, and then the huge effort of providing material for the struggle absorbed every ounce of slack that was left in the great industrial machine.

Throughout the war there was more work to do than there were hands to do it, and the need was so imperative that no consideration of cost was allowed to operate. The house of Bo-Bo was cheerfully burned to roast the pig. Wages were abundant, the standard of living rose to a hitherto unknown level, and poverty and distress seemed to be miraculously banished. It was not until the summer of 1920 that the specter really appeared on the horizon. Many had expected it to appear as soon as the war was over and the army was demobilized. In the event these fears proved to be unfounded. After a brief pause in December, 1918, British industry was caught up on the flood tide of a boom of unprecedented dimensions. For the time being, currency inflation and a demand for the renewal of equipment which had been destroyed or worn out in the recent struggle served to bring about a state of over-confidence in our business men and a specious appearance of prosperity in our industries. Prices continued to rise and with prices, wages. Firms were so booked up with orders that they did not mind what they paid for their labor. During the whole of 1919 and the early part of 1920 the index of unemployment never rose above two per cent. It seemed as if the gloomy predictions of the experts were to be falsified, as the war itself had falsified them, and that for the first time in history a great war was to be followed by no disastrous economic consequences.

But a break was inevitable and in the autumn of 1920 it actually came. There had been something unhealthy about the boom from the beginning; it had been a boom of prices rather than a boom of production—the output of goods produced in many staple trades was smaller in 1920 than in 1923, a year of deep depression. The appearance of prosperity was begotten of inflation and over-confidence. Behind the veil of artificial prices, the impoverishment of our export markets, the diminution of the will to work on the part of our workers, and the inefficiency and unnatural distortion which four years of production for war had brought about in our industries, were stern realities which sooner or later were bound to make themselves felt.

By the spring of 1920, the process of expansion had reached its limit. The Treasury had already announced its intention to discontinue inflation. In the absence of renewed inflation the Banks could not lend much farther with safety. In the third week in April the Bank Rate was raised to seven per cent, and forthwith the whole structure of inflated credit began to tumble like a house of cards. Into the question of the wisdom or unwisdom of the deflation policy I need not enter here; I am dealing with the facts, not with the causes from which they spring.

For a short time employment was not affected. Firms were booked so far ahead with orders that during the next six months they could still work to capacity. But by the autumn the demand for labor had begun to slacken. The first coal strike drove the unemployment index above the normal. A brief rally followed and then the bottom dropped out of the market altogether. In December, 1920, the percentage of trade unionists out of employment was six. By the end of the next quarter it had doubled. Then came the great coal strike and all previous records were broken. In June, twenty-three per cent of the trade unionists making returns were unemployed. Over three million work people were on the books of the Employment Exchanges as either unemployed or on organized short time.*

* In the greater part of this article I refer to the percentage of unemployed trade unionists rather than to the returns of unemployed drawing insurance benefit. The basis of the latter returns has shifted so often that it is useless for purposes of comparison.

A slight recovery followed. The unemployment directly caused by the strike was not likely to last once the dispute was settled. But by then we were in the trough of depression, and all through the year the index never dropped below fourteen per cent. By December it was back at sixteen per cent, and so it continued for the whole of the winter.

From the summer of 1922 there commenced a gradual recovery. The flood tide of depression which had overwhelmed all industries now began to recede. By 1924 in many industries unemployment was in a fair way to become normal. But in some industries it persisted. The gradual revival of credit only served to isolate more effectively the more permanent causes of depression. With the exception of the coal industry, which at that time was enjoying an artificial prosperity due to the stoppage of supplies from the Ruhr, the export industries continued in a state of severe depression. And the effect of this upon employment was doubly severe, for many of these industries, notably engineering and shipbuilding, had received large accessions of labor during the war, much in excess of their normal recruitment. In these industries 30 per cent of unemployment was not an unusual figure. In the large engineering and shipbuilding centers unemployment had become chronic. The general tide of depressions had receded, but it had left in its wake these stagnant pools of unemployment, and at no time did the actual number of the unemployed drop much below one million.

It is difficult to describe in measured terms the degree and extent of suffering that these figures indicate. That can only be estimated by those who have lived in it. Only those who have watched day after day the dreary groups of dull-eyed hopeless able-bodied men and women hanging about the doors of employment exchanges or who have witnessed the dismal processions of the workless, carrying their pitiful banners with "we want work" inscribed upon them which are the common sights of all our great industrial centers, can properly appreciate the toll of hope and happiness which is registered by these statistics.

Of course even here it is possible to exaggerate It has been well said that if we are to preserve a sense of proportion we should concentrate our attention on the index of people employed rather than on the index of those out of employment. Even when there were 23 per cent unemployed there were 77 per cent at work. At the worst there was employment for the majority. It needs to be borne in mind also that the unemployed are not a standing army of roughly 1,300,000; they are a shifting army composed largely of people who have periods of employment alternating with periods of unemployment. The disease is chronic, but the victims are not always the same victims.

Moreover, even when we turn to the unemployed there are certain allowances which have to be made before we can get a proper perspective. A certain proportion of the people returned as unemployed are in point of fact unemployable. However carefully the figures are compiled, a considerable number of people who by reason of old age, physical disability, or some defect of will or of intellect will hardly ever be likely to get work, are bound to get into the total. According to certain investigations made by the Ministry of Labor, the number of those who from physical disability and the like are really unemployable must be in the neighborhood of thirty thousand; if those who are unemployable for psychological reasons were included no doubt the total would be much higher.

Again it needs to be remembered that at the best of times there is inevitably some unemployment. At every season in the year some trades are not working up to capacity—some workers are out of employment. The mere fact of change in industry, the fact that some industries are expanding while others are on the decline, some firms are going bankrupt while some are increasing their organiza-

tion, inevitably involves a certain amount of unemployment at any given moment. Trades like warehousing and the unloading of ships demand a large floating reserve of labor. Before the war, except in years of exceptional business activities, there was normally a body of some 400,000 unemployed. Since the war this figure of normal unemployment has probably increased; if, therefore, we are to form a true view of the measure of abnormal unemployment, we must start from a datum of 400,000 rather than zero.

But when all these deductions have been made, when every precaution has been taken against undue exaggeration, the extent of the trouble remains unparalleled in our experience and perhaps in the experience of any highly organized modern community. At no time since 1921 has the surplus of abnormal unemployment fallen below 600,000 and for the greater part of the time it has stood very considerably above that total. Even at the best period of 1924, when it was thought we had at last turned the corner, the percentage of unemployment among trade unionists was little better than it was in the worst slumps of the pre-war period. The occasional misfortune of those days has become the daily experience of this generation.

There is a further consideration which adds to the gravity of the unemployment figures. The disease affects most acutely those industries which have been the pillars of British commercial prosperity in the past. In what are known as the sheltered trades—trades which are free from the external competitive struggle—employment is high and wages are high. Everything associated with the luxury life of London is prosperous. The conditions and pay of the railway workers are enormously better than they were before the war. All classes of workmen who can hold the public at ransom, as it were—electricians, transport workers, and so on—have improved their position. All the multitude of people who are employed by the public authorities retain their work and approximately their standard of pay. The tram conductor and even the street cleaner have secure employment and relatively high wages, while the skilled mechanic walks the street or, if working, works for half the wage that the unskilled man in sheltered employment is getting. It is the great staple industries like coal, iron, steel, shipbuilding, engineering which swell the bulk of the unemployment figures. Take the Tyne-side district as an illustration. Great towns face each other for several miles on both sides of the river, from Newcastle to Shields. The area is famous as a shipbuilding, mining, shipping, and engineering center. Here are the percentages of registered unemployed in the leading local industries:

Steel Manufacturing	65.00 per cent
Coal Mining	30.40
Shipbuilding	34.32
Marine Engineering	30.00
Engineering	27.90
Mercantile Marine	27.10
Copper and Chemical	22.50

In a word, it is in the vital productive industries of the country that unemployment is highest and in the secondary and often less important callings that it is least; and it is the fact that it is the flower of the artisan class who have been thrown on the scrap heap that constitutes the gravest aspect of the unemployment returns.

III

In such conditions had it not been for the system of Unemployment Insurance our position would have been perilous in the extreme. Certain measures of direct assistance to industry in the shape of loans for civic development and guarantees for overseas trading were indeed possible and certain measures were taken. It is a matter of considerable dispute to what extent all the available measures of this kind were utilized. But the roots of the trouble were so widespread and deep-seated that the direct capacity of any single government by itself to revive trade was necessarily limited, and however much could be

done in the long run by a foreign policy designed to bring about a revival of world trade by international pacification, such relief must necessarily be gradual. It could do nothing to solve the immediate problem, and the immediate problem was imperative. Apart from any consideration of justice, the public temper would not have tolerated a widespread condition of poverty and want. The collapse from unprecedented well-being to unprecedented distress, especially in the circumstances of the time, would have brought the country to the brink of revolution if there had been no effective measure of relief. It was inevitable that the main effort of the state should take the form of palliation of the effects of unemployment rather than any radical remedy of its cause. It was almost inevitable that the main force of the depression should be borne by the system of Unemployment Insurance.

Unemployment Insurance in England is no post-war innovation. It was introduced before the war as an integral part of the Liberal policy of constructive social reform, carried through in the 1906–14 period. But in its first form it applied only to engineering, shipbuilding, building, and a few kindred trades, and although it was partially extended to all the munition trades during the war, it was not until 1920, on the very eve of the depression, that it was made applicable to the whole employed population, with the exception of domestic servants and agricultural laborers.

In outline the system is simple though its administrative intricacies are infinite. Every workman is provided with an unemployment insurance book, and so long as he is in employment his employer is under a statutory obligation each week to fix in this book an insurance stamp, the cost of which is met partly by himself and partly by deductions from wages. The moneys thus raised are paid into an insurance fund and a further contribution to the fund is made by the state. When the worker falls out of employment, he takes his unemployment book to employment exchanges and, provided they have no job available for him, he is entitled to unemployment benefit—so many weeks of benefit for so many contributions to the Insurance Fund.* If a job is available and he refuses it, he is not entitled to benefit.

Such is the system in its very simplest outlines. In normal times with a fixed contribution from the exchequer and a rigid limitation of the amount of benefit that is allowed in respect of any worker's contribution, the scheme finances itself. But the heavy incidence of unemployment which occurred before the fully extended system of 1920 had time to accumulate a fund and before the insured workpeople had time to accumulate a number of contributions sufficient to entitle them to benefit for any lengthy period of time, has necessitated certain departures from the pure principles of insurance. During the worst periods of the depression, it was necessary to borrow extensively from the Treasury and although this loan has been partly repaid, the Fund is not yet completely out of debt. Moreover, it has been found expedient to allow insured workmen who have fallen out of employment to draw benefit in advance of their anticipated contributions—"uncovenanted benefit" as it is termed in official technology. But in the main the original principles of the scheme have been adhered to. It is still an insurance scheme. If the unemployed workman has not actually paid for the benefits he draws he will have to pay for them in the future. To describe the relief it affords as a "dole," as is sometimes done in the popular press, is entirely to misapprehend its nature.

On the whole it has worked well. If account is taken of the late hour of its inception—the system as it now stands, as was pointed out above, came into

* The rate of contribution due from employers and workers respectively and the rates of benefits payable have varied so much that any single set of figures would be misleading. The present rates under the Act of last year are 8d. from the employer and 7d. from the employee in the case of men, and 7d. and 6d. in the case of women. The rates of benefit are 18/- and 15/- per week for men and women respectively and 2/- per head for dependents.

operation only when the depression had virtually started—and the conditions under which it has been administered, its success is very remarkable. Whatever its defects, at a time when governments abroad have been tottering it has tided us over one of the most difficult periods in our history, without serious social disturbance. The suffering it has averted is incalculable. There has been poverty and dull despair—these were unavoidable—but there has been little or no destitution. There has been less actual starvation than during any previous depression in our history. To some extent it has been inadequate and some have had to have recourse to the Poor Law. But in the main it has sustained the physique and the homes of the unemployed without exposing them to the demoralizing influence of State assistance. So far as the prevention of destitution is concerned it has abundantly justified its existence.

Nor can serious criticism be made of the efficiency of its administration. From time to time "glaring cases" of laxity are reported which are made the pretext for an indictment of the whole administration. The *obiter dicta* of stipendary magistrates upon the demoralizing effects of the "dole" are paraded with great importance, as if time spent in hearing police-court evidence were a qualification for generalization about the working classes as a whole. But whenever impartial inquiry has been made into the working of the system, its efficiency has been triumphantly vindicated. Whatever abuses there have been have arisen, not as a result of any laxity of administration, but as a result of the conditions under which administration has had to take place.

It was not to be expected that during so long a period of severe unemployment some evil consequences would not arise from maintaining men in idleness. In the main, those consequences have been confined to a comparatively small class. There is no evidence that the effect upon the greater number of recipients of benefit has been anything but good. It is sometimes said that the system has undermined the will to work of the whole population. There is no foundation for such irresponsible statements. That there are cases in which men have preferred to be idle on the insurance allowance rather than honestly to seek work is true. Laborers with three or four children are inclined to ask when a job is offered them, "What does this mean? The wage is only so many shillings more than I get for doing nothing." But as a general allegation against the artisan class the criticism is wholly unfounded. If the morale of the working class is being undermined. the fact is due to enforced idleness, with its inevitable decay of capacity, and not to the desire to live on the public funds. One of the tragedies of the situation is that so many of the flower of the highly skilled workers have emigrated rather than suffer what the best of them still regard as the humiliation of living on the insurance money.

It is perhaps true that the existence of the system has contributed to the quite reasonable disinclination of the working classes to accept necessary readjustments of wage-rates. When a man is not in actual distress he is naturally tempted to hold out a little longer than he otherwise would before accepting work at lower wages. It is perhaps true that the existence of a provision whereby a man who refuses work butside his own district or occupation is not thereby disqualified from benefit has tended to retard essential redistributions of workers. But to allege that for the majority of adult British workmen a benefit of eighteen shillings per week (plus two shillings per week for dependents) is a deterrent to looking for permanent employment is an accusation that cannot be substantiated. No one who knows the British working classes can doubt that it is false.

The main difficulty arises with that class of young people who have come on to the labor market since the commence-

ment of the depression. Many of these have never been for any length of time in settled employment, and there can be no question that the effect upon them of the receipt of uncovenanted benefit is often very demoralizing. A generation is arising which looks upon support from the State and contributions by its fellow workers as its natural prerogative. Its self-respect is undermined, its will to work is negligible. If jobs prove to be available it takes care that it stays in them only long enough to qualify for fresh periods of benefit. Cases are even reported of young people who have married on the benefit. There can be no doubt that the existence of this class presents a problem of the first order of difficulty and there are not wanting politicians even in the ranks of the Labor Party who do not hesitate to say that the only way of dealing with it is absolutely to prohibit the payment of benefit to workers below the age of twenty-one unless they have dependents.

But this is a minor blemish. It cannot be held to mar the main achievement of the system—the preservation from destitution of a body of unemployed workpeople which has never been less than a million and which for very considerable periods has been very much greater. We may dislike the system. We may groan under the vast burdens it imposes. We may complain of the abuses which arise when men are maintained in idleness. But when all this has been said, it remains true that no satisfactory substitute for it has ever been proposed. It remains true that because of its existence the nation is better off to-day in health, hope, and contentment than it could have been without it.

IV

But what of the future? Is the present intensity of unemployment, with its attendant drain upon our resources and the morale of our rising generation, to persist for ever? The partial recovery of 1923 and 1924 has not been sustained. During the winter of 1924–25 the index of unemployment was stationary or slightly rising and since the spring of 1925 it has been rising sharply. In June, 1924, it was 7.2 per cent. Last June it was 12.3, and there are now many who fear the worst: that the days of our trade expansion are over and that either we are doomed to a progressively diminishing standard of life or a permanent incubus of unemployment growing heavier as our population increases.

Fortunately there is no reason to suppose that these extreme fears are justified. Our position is far from all that we could hope, but it is equally certainly not all that we dread. The fear of a greatly increased burden of unemployment due to a great increase in our population is without foundation. In default of a change in the present tendency of the birth rate that would be little short of miraculous, there is not going to be any great increase in the size of our population. It is now reasonably certain that within a relatively short time the population of Great Britain will have become stationary.* During the next few years the annual increase of applicants for work will become negligible. In any case our problem is not to find employment for an indefinitely larger population but so to organize our resources as to provide for a population not much larger than the one we have.

And given peace at home and abroad, there is every hope that in the long run we shall be successful. The recent setback to recovery is only in part due to causes that are likely to be anything but transitory. In part it is due to difficulties in the coal mines that were bound to arise when the artificial stimulus due to the closing down of the Ruhr pitheads ceased to be present: throughout the whole world to-day there is depression in the coal industry. But in part it is due —even in the coal mines—to monetary disturbances attendant on our restora-

* See the remarkable evidence submitted by Dr. A. L. Bowley in *Is Unemployment Inevitable* and the *Economic Journal*, 1924.

tion of the gold standard. The rapid appreciation of sterling has caused a disparity between our price level and the price levels of countries with which we trade, which is affecting our exports adversely. The pound is too dear to make it worth while for purchasers abroad to buy at the prices we offer.

But this cause of depression is bound to be transitory. It cannot persist indefinitely. The process of readjustment may be painful. There are many who hold—and I share the view—that it will be so painful that it would have been wise to have refrained from the restoration of the standard at present. But there is no reason to suppose that we shall suffer indefinitely from appreciated exchanges.

For the rest recovery is likely to be more gradual. But unless we are to assume that the trade of the world is going to remain permanently below the pre-war level there is little ground for ultimate pessimism. For there is no evidence to show that when recovery comes, we shall not participate in it fully. On the contrary, as the investigations of our Commission on Industry indicate, so far from losing in the competition for the trade of the world, we have actually improved our position. The volume of the world's trade has diminished and with our exceptional dependence on overseas trade, we have suffered in consequence. But of that diminished volume we have actually succeeded in obtaining a larger proportion than formerly. In that fact is the happiest augury of the future. Just as we have been the chief sufferers by the paralysis of world trade, so we may reasonably look to be the chief beneficiaries of world recovery and stabilization.

It is fair, then, on a calm survey of the facts to hold the view that unemployment in England, though prolonged and severe beyond all previous experience, is not a permanent phenomenon. In some industries which were over-recruited during the war, or are suffering general changes in the direction of world consumption, such as engineering and coal, it will take longer to disappear than in others. But in the end, given peace and a recovery of world trade, even there it should disappear. Given peace and a recovery of the world's trade—these are the conditions of escape from the Serbonian bog in which British industry is engulfed. They are conditions that are not unattainable, for the world's will to live and to prosper must override, and indeed are at last visibly overriding, the insane passions which brought it so near to the brink of irretrievable ruin.

I DISCOVER THE NEW WORLD

A STUDY IN REPATRIATION

BY WALDO FRANK

THE most important room at home was the library. Our house was the usual four-story brownstone segment in the unbroken wall of an upper West Side block. There were plenty of windows. Those to the north looked out upon the street where grocery wagons rattled by day and by night the gas lamps dimly slumbered. Those to the south gave a broad view of another wall of houses which at dark became fantastic with lighted windows holding many secrets and black silhouettes mysteriously alive behind drawn blinds. And beyond the houses was the glow of the great city. The library had but a single window; it was too little for so large and low a room. Even by day the library was dark and, since the window opened on a strip of yard choked by an ugly ailanthus, I never looked through that window. When I was in this room New York did not come in; New York stayed distant and silent. The real world became this world of books; and almost all the books had come from Europe.

Among the pictures on the walls were those of two Americans: Washington and Lincoln. But they had little to do with the America outside the window. They spoke to me less eloquently than the novelists and poets of England, than the thinkers of Germany, than the Athenians and Romans all living on the shelves. This library in my father's house in the city of New York was a sanctuary of Europe. It glowed with a secluded quiet and with a life of its own. And here my childhood lived with an intensity and depth of feeling that not school, not the streets could give me.

My father nearly every year went to Europe. We would go down to the ship often, on the eve of his sailing, board the great vessel, and dine with the captain in his cabin. I was in Europe then: everything, from the food we ate to the words we heard, were strange to America. Father sailed away, and mother bundled us children into a train. We got at last into a shimmer of meadows and of young green trees. But even in the mountains Europe was not far distant. Letters would presently arrive with foreign stamps. They were long letters: page upon page of personal description in which my father narrated his adventures in Hamburg, in London, in Paris. His trips were short—business trips. When he came back he brought Europe still more vividly along; in the air of his clothes, in the scent of his label-plastered luggage. And then mother was always there: and that made more of Europe. Mother was an artist. She sang every day. Beethoven, Wagner, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Wolf—these were the voices that came with us even to the mountains.

My room in the city home was on the top floor. I was the youngest, a tragic fate since it meant my going earliest to bed. It was not easy, this clambering up from the lighted drawing-room filled with the cheer of guests, through the shadowed house. But the fourth floor

was mine, and already I was a confirmed breaker of laws. I knew that my father would presently sit down at the organ or the piano to accompany my mother. I would then take a blanket from my bed, wrap myself snugly, and seat myself on the stair. My mother's singing came clearly through the house. School was a dim fable beside the reality of those songs; even the strong words on the library shelves were weak by contrast. That lovely, breathing voice with its perfect modulation and its subtle colors brought the lands across the sea miraculously near as I sat in guilt—and in ecstasy—upon the stair.

So when I went to Europe (I went several times before I was old enough for college) I found familiar lands. My upbringing, the library, above all, my mother's profound art had made them mine. The American authors whom I knew meant little. Longfellow and Holmes and Lowell were, in another way, as European as my father. Whittier's poems about slavery were less vivid than the tales of my grandmother who had lived through the Civil War in the South and who told us children of her adventures with the Yankee army that burned her house and robbed her of her goods, or of her running the blockade in a tiny rowboat in Mobile (with mother, a baby in her arms—and the constant fear that if the baby cried, the Yankee boats would find them). Cooper's redskins and sea-rovers seemed more remote to me than the Londoners of Dickens or the Parisians of Balzac. And as to Poe, whose wistful little house my father showed me in a waste of goats and cans way out in Fordham—his land was one of wraiths and silences, in no way kin to this rectangular array of streets that was called New York and that, for me, was all America.

II

In my fifteenth year I had a great adventure. I picked up a history of American literature which spoke, coldly and slightingly enough, of an unknown poet, of whose curious style there was appended an example called "O Pioneers!"

I procured a green-bound volume entitled *Leaves of Grass;* it had a title page in archaic type and the portrait of an ancient bearded sage, all gray, who signed himself Walt Whitman. I read, studied, annotated, as I might have done with the Bible if I had been reared religiously. Whitman stirred deep voices in my soul; he inspired me. I believe in those early days I understood him well enough. But one so obvious fact escaped me, since I was not ready for it: the fact that this man was an American, and that his experience was related to my own. He was as remote—and holy—as a Hebrew prophet!

That spring there was the annual oratory contest at the High School. The usual bright lads rose before an auditorium of a thousand people and bespoke "The Spirit of '76," "The Blessings of Democracy," and so forth. And then a strange thing happened. A short, black-haired boy stood upon the rostrum and for half an hour harangued the audience about the merits of an unknown, dead poet called Walt Whitman. He must have been eloquent as well as amusing, for the Judges gave him the Gold Medal for his effort. But the whole affair remained somehow outside of his experience as an American. These teachers who had rewarded him for praising Whitman kept on quoting Longfellow. Whitman had so little contact with this reality of New York life that his value seemed well symbolized by the useless medal of gold which the boy's mother put away and which he never saw again. Whitman was an outsider, a myth—almost an outcast.

But Europe came ever closer. I was done with school and too young for college. So I was sent abroad. I discovered myself at sixteen, at seventeen, to be of an age which on the Continent was deemed the age of a man! I consorted with students from every land of

Europe: Russians, Spaniards, Serbians, Jews from Egypt, burly football players from Great Britain. They were not "pretty" fellows. They knew life—women—books. We sat about at night, drinking our tea with rum; and the air was less thick with tobacco smoke than with the thunder of exciting talk. Revolution, art, morality, death: all the old dwellers of the books which I had met in my father's library took on flesh, grew warm, grew pressing. And here at last, so many miles from his Manhattan, Whitman became alive; Poe found recognition. "America?" said my European friends. "It is the place that gave us Poe and Whitman."

I had engaged my room at Harvard. But I wanted to go to Heidelberg. I wanted, like my friends, to make the rounds of the great universities of Germany, England, Paris. I wanted to persevere in this world of midnight tea and rum with its dizzy flights into art and metaphysics. Europe beckoned me on, like some dark, mellow woman in whom the Mother eternally old and the Lover wondrously young were merged. And my father would not have stood against my will. He was an imperious, passionate man, whose prime passion was respect for the personality of others. A tyrant in matters of deportment, he hated all interference in adventures of the spirit. He had watched me, perhaps amused, perhaps with a hidden pang, go about at the age of twelve with my undigested load of Ibsen and Zola and Tolstoi. He had observed me, bored with school, become a truant, frequent the vaudeville shows or barricade myself from furious teachers in the office of our High School paper. Now, when the formal letters came from Heidelberg, telling the young American that he knew enough to be admitted, my father would not have said no, whatever his conviction. But my older brother was less philosophical. He came to Europe; and in a hotel room high up above the Seine we had what for me was a decisive battle.

"You are not going to Heidelberg," said my brother. "You are going to be an American, by gum! And what's more, you are not going to Harvard. You're queer enough as it is. You're going to be not only an American, but as *human* an American as I can make you. I'm going to send you to a place that will smoothe out your angles and your crotchets. Yale for you." . . . And to Yale I went.

I suppose I had been ill-prepared for the "dear old Campus." My classmates were engrossed in football, not in ideas; in Greek-letter fraternities, not in secret revolutionary orders. They got drunk on beer and sang sentimental songs, whereas my friends in Europe had sipped their liquor soberly for the most part, and got drunk on Nietzsche. Good, groping, earnest fellows, my chums at Yale seemed children to me. I went through college a rather cantankerous rebel. To amuse myself, I wrote dramatic criticism for a local paper, losing no occasion to belay America's woful "lack of culture"; I played Bach; I wrote a book on the Literature of Modern France; and always my eyes continued to turn east, across the Atlantic Ocean.

Active journalism in New York was a leap from a nursery to a sort of jungle. The academic cloisters had struck me as anæmic imitations of the full-blooded youthfulness which I had seen in Europe. I liked sport well enough; but was there not as well an athleticism in literature and in philosophy? Now came New York once again: a New York of murders, robberies, politics, and visiting celebrities who spent the interviewer's hour telling him pleasant things about America which were not so.

This New York seemed wholly *body*. While the slums reeked with poverty and vice, while the high spirit of youth was trampled out by the thresh of a mechanical progress, the City seemed aware only of problems of traffic, of taxation, of money. A vast town, New York; but since it was concerned only with the mechanics of sheer physical

well-being, of sheer physical growth, it struck me as a baby—a sort of Brobdingnagian baby. If a man proposed municipal ownership of public utilities, or cheap gas, he was treated like a monster. If a woman was suspected of infidelity, it seemed right to drag her to a divorce court; and the important thing—the only important thing—seemed to be to ascertain the *fact;* the deep hidden significances of her character, of her unhappiness, of the subtle treatment of her husband—all these elements of *truth* were ignored, were unguessed at. I could not accept this gross, this infantile America, which was all the America I knew. Being a child myself, I made the same old gross mistake: I imagined that my Paradise existed "over there," across the sea. I packed a bag at last and went to live in Paris.

III

When I arrived it was nightfall. I left my bags at a hotel and wandered up the Boul' Mich'—the gaudy thoroughfare of the Latin Quarter. I saw no face that I knew in the thronged terraces of the cafés which made two continuous rivers from the Gardens of the Luxembourg down to the Seine. But I felt happy and I felt at home. I began to write. I found myself in a world where writing—the sheer creative act—was considered a sacrament and a service: not because of what it brought, not for what it did—for itself. It was in the air—this rhythm of *creation*. Life was looked on as a lovely, mysterious adventure, and its true priests were they who sang of it, who pictured it, who revealed its beauty. I made friends. Here, among these swarms of enthusiasts who spent their days arguing about a picture or a poet, I found men after my own heart. And I found a woman, a true daughter of this world who took me in and made me part of it. And then, after a brief year, just as I was beginning truly to be at home, I packed my bags and I went back to New York!

What had happened? I was having a good time and a successful one. Living was cheap here. It was extremely easy for a journalist like myself to send articles and stories to the United States, convert the few dollars into many francs, and live like a young lord in this perpetual holiday town where poverty was no disgrace, where there was as much honor in contributing to certain magazines as in being elected to the Senate! Did not the wealthy ladies of Paris find the same thrill in climbing five musty stairs to the garret of an obscure American author that our own ladies found in dining with celebrities from Paris? Was there indeed not a whole world here fashioned for the artist and ruled by his desire? Paris itself, vast and modern, had the leisurely freedom of an aristocratic village. Here was a huge city in which there were happy people, in which there were trees and gardens, in which there was room for all moods, all liberties—even for a bit of license.

I had more than I had ever had, and yet I gave it up quite simply because I did not want it, and I could not stand it. In several of the cafés of Paris there gathered artists from America. Many of them had not been home in years; most of them came from small places in the interior and had had no contact with Europe until they had come over. They spoke seldom of our country. But when they did, they sneered, they jeered, they swore that they were done with the barbaric land that had given them birth. I could not argue with them; so much of what they said was simply fact. Yet it was in the company of these Americans that I began to feel most sharply my need of coming back. If what they said was true, all the more urgent was the return of men like themselves who claimed to be conveyers of the truth, creators of beauty—men who could endow America with what they accused America of lacking.

But I went little with these expatriates. My knowledge of the language, my love and, bit by bit, my work gained me an

entrance into the true world of France, which was before the War the home of so much of Europe. I was happy here, but I was not *needed*. I was being nourished by what other men, through centuries and ages, had created. I was a parasite. At least, so it seemed to me. I do not believe that I thought further in those youthful days. Certainly, I thought scarcely at all of what I was going to find when I returned. I knew simply that I was going home. I left the best friends that I had ever had, the most congenial home, I left my love (she never understood). I took a boat. I rented a room in Washington Place. I stared at the dirty wall—and wondered what madness had driven me along.

IV

The year was 1913 and I was twenty-three. I was alone and miserable as I had never been. In Paris they had not understood why I had left them. But in America no one even knew that I was here. I had outgrown my old friends. I was done with newspapers. Everything that a young man most needs—companionship, ideas, love—was beyond the ocean. Here? I lay on my iron cot and stared at the blank walls; I heard the elevated trains pound past and the arrogant motors shuffle and the crowds press, press in their weary quest for money—in their vast indifference to all which made *my* world. I was unable to eat, unable to sleep—unable to work. At times, in my weakness, I thought of what I had left behind in Paris. But always I knew that I was not going back—never going back until I had proven to my friends abroad, both the Europeans and the Americans, that I was right in leaving.

Twelve brief years ago America was not what the young artist or writer finds to-day. There were no magazines hospitable to their virgin efforts, there were no Little Theaters, no liberal weeklies. The land seemed a hostile waste, consumed by the fires of possession and production. Whatever "literature and art" there was had to be imported from Europe in order to find a market. But did not this fact prove that such as I were needed? The very fact that life was hard here, that life did not seem to want me, that America was quite resigned to letting me starve—did not this prove that I was *needed*, and that I had come home?

So I set to work upon the pleasant task of making myself wanted in a world that seemed to be getting along extremely well without me. I soon learned that it was getting on so well, chiefly on the surface. I had a vision then, in those dark impotent days, which gave me light and strength, and which has never left me.

I saw our land as a fumbling giant child, idealistically hungry as was no other land in all the West, but helpless to express its hunger. Our forefathers had come here brimful of religious energy: all of them, whether they were Puritans from England, Catholics from Spain, or Jews from Germany and Russia. And here were material things that must be done: a continent to clear, bridges to build, a nation to house. Our fathers had learned to perform these substantial chores; they had performed them so miraculously well because of the spiritual force which drove them. But now that they longed to express their deeper dreams, their subtler ideals, they did not know how. So that, for want of better, they poured all their poetry and most of their religion into the *business at hand:* made it express their idealism which they could not express otherwise at all!

We spent so much time making money because the poets had not yet come to teach us to make better things. We were so proud of our machines because the builders of more significant beauty had not yet come among us. We were such busy-bodies about the personal habits of our neighbors—keeping them from an innocent drink or even from a cigarette—because the teacher had not

yet appeared to show us better ways of ennobling our souls. And finally, we marched about in white sheets, passed restrictive laws against immigration, grew intolerant of the chaos of creeds and races in our midst because we were not yet strong enough, mature enough to conceive of a unity of inclusion rather than of exclusion.

Now I was ready to see America. I had intellectually or in the flesh been "round the world." I had known personally the men of modern Europe, studied the masters of ancient Greece, Israel, and India. I discovered America last—which was the right way to discover it, since America is to be the last word, the summing up of all the yesterdays which have poured their blood upon the American shores.

I went west. Under the noisy, dirty braggart mood of Chicago I felt a childlike spirit—I found childlike men. I found a fertile and sweet world pushing up in this town which Sandburg called the Hog-butcher of the world—pushing up under the coal and the grime like springtime grass beneath the muck of winter.

I helped to edit a country paper in the heart of Kansas. I spoke to the farmers, wrote for them, lived with them. And though I had done the same thing with the intellectuals of Paris, I found a warmth here of response which I had not found abroad. Here in this crude corn-grower hungering to "git America and his dream together," and in his overworked wife scheming to give her girls the "culture" she had never had, was a Seed of the spirit which needed only nurture and the sun to flower. And I had talks in the kitchens of solitary farms that moved me in a way mysteriously deep and gave me strength.

I lived with coal miners. I found them hungry for light, possessed of an infallible instinct for the tragic beauty of the world. They too were spiritual Seed long underground and ready to push up. And when a fellow who had mined since he was twelve and who had never seen his dad by light of day piloted me through a leaky shaft with a care that was loving and paternal, I realized what I had won by giving up salutes of another sort in Paris.

I went south—to the country which my mother had left as a baby. I spent months in lodgings in that slumberous aristocrat of cities, Richmond. Here, too, were æsthetes, weavers of silly images of distant Paradise. I did not see them. I saw a people, stricken still under the curse of a past and under the load of an intricate present: a people hungering for light, for expression—a people hungering and, hence, a people growing. I came to know the negroes in the cypress swamps of Alabama and Mississippi. I lived with them, I spoke to them in their churches and their schools. In these dark breasts was a flame heightened with pathetic ease by the slightest show of understanding. I realized the wondrous wealth of spirit and of dream which America possesses in her negroes.

And I saw the Indians of the Southwest pueblos. In their classic ceremonial dances, in their deeply unselfish religion of nature, in the dignity and restraint of their lives and culture, I recognized an American past—and an American example. Here was a spiritual splendor which America had created. Like all life, it was waning. Would we create it anew in our own culture?

In South Dakota I lived for a while with a Norwegian banker who aimed to enter politics with the Sermon on the Mount as his sole platform. . . . I could go on. Everywhere I found spiritual energy, religious aspiration—ignorance only of the means for their expression. Everywhere I found the same America —*my own America:* an inarticulate land which yet had spoken loud and clear enough to call me back from Paris.

V

So finally, last year, I went again to Europe. I had put my vision of America

and of its people into books. Many intellectuals had sneered. A large group of them had even come together under the leadership of one of the Americans who spend their time in Paris and had published a fat book to prove that America was hopeless, an altogether unlivable, unbearable place. Much of the response which my books had won had come, not from the intellectuals, but from those very byways of our country —the farms of the West, the cities of the North, the fields of the South— where I had wandered and where I had been nourished. And some of the response had come from Europe. My books had been translated. And now that I was again in Paris the writers of that great city called me to them and told me with warm hospitality that this new America of which I (and many others) wrote was what *they* needed. For, they said, the spiritual power of Europe was declining. Europe's noon was past. Europe, which had created and nurtured us, now needed nurture! If America was indeed to be a land to distil new spiritual values out of our modern chaos it would be the savior of the Old World!

Some of the writers of France and England had been here, and were pessimistic. "Do not believe him," they said. "He and his sort are only importations from Europe—they represent a transplanted dream of the Old World. They cannot thrive in America. They will be crushed out. Their light is a twilight, not a dawn. The future of America is steel, more steel; is gold, more gold; is the triumph of a sordid, ignorant Herd. There is no hope."

But at these men I smiled. They had seen what I saw as a boy: they had been repelled by the crude, the ignorant surface. . . .

A few days before I left I was sitting in a library infinitely richer than the one in my father's house. It was the library of the great master, Anatole France. There he sat in his red skullcap by the open fire. About him in manuscript, in illuminated volume, in precious *bibelot* ranged wide treasures of European culture, and in him lived the essence of that culture—the exquisite distillation of the thought of a thousand masters, of a hundred ages.

"Make no mistake," he smiled at me, "Europe is a tale that has been told. Our long twilight is before us. But I believe in your American dream. And I will tell you why. It is not because of your books. It is because of the pictures I have seen, in quite common magazines, of your girls and your women. You have said a great deal about Puritanism, about Materialism in America. Those glorious girls belie all that. How could an ugly world produce such women? How could such women produce an ugly world?" . . .

Not long after came the last illness of this last full heir of European culture. And I recalled how prophecy had spoken from that splendid room so full of the past: a prophecy of our future, a challenge for us!

Ours is indeed a magnificent adventure. We must not be complacent, nor too sure. We are a people young and ignorant. Our faults are not shallow, our mistakes are not small. We may fail—but we may succeed! What else so worthy of our effort? To create in America a soul that shall befit America's glorious body! So I mused as I sailed homeward. Europe lay behind me.

IS BIG BUSINESS A CAREER?

BY ONE WHO THINKS NOT

The author of this article is a young man who has been connected with several large corporations where he has made an excellent record. He has now left (for reasons given in his article) to go into business for himself. He presents a picture of big business life quite different from that found in the conventional story of success.—*Editor's Note.*

FOR the last two years I have been working for a large corporation in a city canyon which is the home of many big businesses. One of the most significant issues which my job has made me face is the blunt question whether I want to make this my life work: does a large corporation really offer an attractive opportunity to the young graduate of a college or a technical school? This, I have found, is not an individual problem. It is being encountered everywhere in the world of large-scale business and industrial organization; and young men seem to be casting their lot outside more often than one would expect.

Here, on the seventeenth floor of a skyscraper on one of the walled streets of lower Manhattan, I sit and look out at the ferry boats and the tugs of the East River. I find myself critical of my steady job and the opportunity which the company has sold me with it—an opportunity which is standardized like an office desk or an inkwell.

I have made a start. I am led to picture myself thirty years from now—should I be patient, industrious, and persistent—as a contented, well-fed man who can and does afford golf and a car. He gets perhaps ten thousand dollars a a year, or possibly fifteen, with a chance of twenty before he retires. Over and above this he has saved a considerable sum out of his salary (as urged by the company's thrift expert) and he has purchased several shares of stock in the business through the company's advantageous plan for employees. He is entitled to a pension when he wishes to retire, and in case of sickness or death the company will make payments to him or to his heirs.

His chief characteristic, therefore, is a sense of security, or rather, the lack of a sense of insecurity. Perhaps this has made him a little smug, or perhaps it has made him simply comfortable. He has an agreeable home and a family. His children are going to a good school and will go to a good college. For friends he has the men who started in the company with him; they are old friends, therefore, and should have much in common.

His title may be Vice President. More probably it is Assistant Vice President, or some rank connoting chieftainship over one of the many major departments. At any rate, he is somebody in the company. True, the business was here when he came and will be here when he is gone; but for the greater part of his life he has occupied a place in it, he has risen to success, and it has ministered to his needs.

I regard this portrait with some interest. All I need do to be this man thirty years from now is to like my job and work at it and to spend my life in a predetermined fashion for a predetermined result. Ability is required, of

course, but it is decidedly secondary to persistence, patience, and a faculty for maintaining pleasant contact with other men. It is no flattery of myself if I regard this future as virtually certain of attainment; in fact, I am invited to do so by the company. Every now and then I am conscious that the company has admitted me into the charmed circle; I am a legatee waiting for an inheritance.

Now I am maintaining that this successful executive with home, friends, family, and competency is a desirable person to be. I have no wish to sneer at him because he takes his ease. Yet I cannot imagine myself in his role. I see the opportunity, but I do not care for it.

Only the other day several of us were called into a conference at which one of the Vice Presidents asked our help in answering a number of questions. He wanted to know, particularly, why young college men do not like to work for large corporations and what the big company can do to attract them. Here was something astonishing—the straightforward recognition by one of the heads of the business that it had failed, that all big business had failed in this respect, despite the glib tradition. I had now an authoritative confirmation of my own more or less casual observations and I set out with the more interest to answer the Vice President's questions.

II

One reason for my own feeling is obvious. Anyone who has absorbed a little psychology knows that a conception of what the future may be contains an infinity of pleasant possibilities, only a few of which can possibly materialize. The conception is bound to be better than the reality. The company wants me to discard the infinite number of pleasant things which cannot come to pass, and to pursue instead a narrowly limited but agreeable certainty.

This is not a bad bargain, if I consider carefully. It is better to count on being an Assistant Vice President and be one than to dream of being and doing any number of wonderful things which, in the end, would turn out less pleasant than the worst dream of all. But I object to the very certainty of the future and the life that leads to it. The sacrifice of all the natural anticipations which would be mine during the next thirty years is too great a price for the assurance of a Vice Presidency after the thirty years are over.

All this is necessarily preliminary and subordinate to the question whether I like my work. There are many men around me who are satisfied. I can be fairly happy for the present, but the satisfaction is conditioned on many sides by factors inherent in a big company.

The most significant limitation is that I am deprived of the sense of achievement which follows the successful completion of a task which a man accomplishes himself. This feeling is an essential part of the hygiene of work. From it is derived the will to pitch in and work some more. For example, a man who has finished splitting a load of wood has a sense of achievement; a man who clears a holiday rush from a grocery store has it; a man who negotiates a great contract has it. But within a large corporation it is so attenuated as to have lost its real significance. The individual is subordinated. The accomplishment of any task is a foreordained fact. There is a delay between the initiation of any procedure and the execution, a delay during which many persons are consulted, many changes suggested, and some adopted—until the climax is exceedingly tame. Everything is reduced to routine. Everything is made impersonal.

Imagine feeling enthusiastic in January about the economies possible after an investigation of purchasing practices; the investigation is complete, the memoranda have all gone onward and upward. Nothing happens. In March the memoranda come back, covered with initials and notes and accompanied by a request

for more information. In April the new information has already become old. Perhaps in May the recommendations are adopted, in greatly modified form; or perhaps they are disregarded because they conflict with a general policy, and the advantages have been weighed and rejected long ago.

In any event, exactly the same things happen whether the individual is accomplishing something or accomplishing nothing. He won't know for a long time which is the case. His daily routine is not associated with success or with failure; it is just routine, that is all.

Perhaps a fair comparison is with an ant hill; there is almost perfect correlation, perfect teamwork, and the most direct application of force to the object which is to be attained. But who wants to be one of the ants in either case?

III

I am interested in what the company has to say to me about my job. The business is so large that it must absorb a great many college men, year in and year out, and a personnel department is charged with the duty of advertising the company and making it seem attractive to desirable graduates.

The words which I see most frequently in the literature of the business are "He started as a clerk." It is, of course, the President of the Company who is usually referred to. There seems to be an assumption that if only young men could be made to understand that the President, with his big job and his sixty thousand or seventy thousand a year, actually started as a ten-dollar-a-week clerk, these young men must perforce become eager to start as clerks for the same company.

I take it for granted that there is a chance of becoming President of the Company, but so is there a chance for any native-born man to become President of the United States. In either case a young college graduate would be considered foolhardy to count on the honor. Besides, there is the question whether one wants to be President.

The statement so often made not only has no logical force—it seems to me quite irrelevant. A human being is making little use of his faculties if he is satisfied so to restrict his foresight. The things he really wants to know about a job cannot be covered by any company slogan; there is a multiplicity of questions, many of them trivial, which he wants answered.

Again, the company lays great stress on the words "steady job." Apparently the personnel department believes most in this argument, and the prospect of an assured future is put forth confidently.

It is true that large-scale business organization, particularly in recent years, has acquired a stability which is quite marvelous. To a large extent the temporary depressions and inflations are nullified by long-period policies and conservative administration of tremendous resources. This conservatism is inevitable because the great corporation has so much to conserve. All in all, I would not balance the surprise element in this sort of an organization against the certainties, even without the company's assurance that the weight is on one side.

I wish the recruiting officers of the business would stop referring to it as "our company" or "our business." After two years of service I cannot help reading into the words a sort of irony. After trying to consider the matter with an open mind, I am firmly of the opinion that the employees in a great corporation cannot be imbued with a sense of proprietorship, or pride, or loyalty simply through continued use of the pronouns "our" and "your." The reason is simply that there is absolutely nothing in the day's work to suggest any such relationship. The source of authority is far removed. There is no volition anywhere except that which comes in terms of command from unseen directors.

And the personnel department fails to adduce any evidence that advancement in the company is due to anything ex-

cept luck. My own start in the business has been too recent for me to overlook the undeniable fact that chance put me in the direct line to what is known as success.

As I see it, this is bound to be the case. A dozen young men of my acquaintance have started in big business under the same general circumstances and at about the same time. One of them, a technical graduate with an excellent record, is not getting ahead, and apparently cannot get ahead for some time. He has a job in a large research organization, rapidly growing, which handles an enormous amount of important and interesting work. The employment department which had sent my friend, glowing with enthusiasm, into a laboratory office immediately forgot about him, of course. He became a member of the staff of a technical man who needed him to handle correspondence, and for a year he has been writing and re-writing routine letters subject to the approval of four or five junior executives. Men who went to work at the same time in other departments have moved up; but in this particular division there have been no forward marches, there are unlikely to be any, and an eager young technical man doubts whether he can wait ten years or so to discover the possibilities of big business.

Exactly the same thing is true of others among this dozen. A man who starts in the purchasing department, for example, advances quickly and feels that there is no limit ahead. A man who starts in the accounting department seems to have no prospects and is told already that he cannot hope for an increase in salary because "he is receiving as much as men in corresponding positions with other companies."

Work is specialized, and the specialist cannot hope to get more or to go a greater distance than similar specialists in other big corporations.

There is always the chance, as in one instance which I know, that a man of ability will be strongly recommended for an increase in salary by a branch office of the company, only to find that the Board of Directors declines to incur any additional expense in that territory. The young man may swallow his hopes, petition for a transfer, which is frequently out of the question, or resign. This corporation practice is known satirically to its victims as "making big business small." Incidentally, despite the extent of the company, all salaries exceeding two or three thousand dollars a year are passed upon by the Board of Directors—a fact bitterly complained about by young men who feel that the Directors are not in a position to know much regarding their capacity or the quality of their work.

As I see it, from my desk on the fringe of mahogany row, we who enter the big corporations are all heirs apparent. Once we settle into our jobs we begin to wait to inherit the salary and duties of men ahead; nothing which we can do can greatly affect the inheritance. And woe to us if we have happened into a part of the business family where there is nothing much to be passed along!

I find myself among the fortunate simply for the reason that I happened to enter the corporation at a place where legacies are frequent and copious. This was pure luck; and I cannot see how it can be anything else in a business where tremendous size makes it necessary to govern by general rules and standards of practice, without any real consideration of the individual.

Is this a reason for hanging on to a so-called good job, once one has been lucky enough to get on the inside? Some of my contemporaries believe that it is; they congratulate themselves that they are "sitting pretty" and promise that they will not run any risks of falling from grace.

A white-haired veteran who was pensioned a short time ago told me that he had disliked his job for years and in his younger days he had planned to resign. But he kept postponing the break, then he was married, and for his wife's sake he stayed with the company. When-

ever he was tempted to follow his inclination, he thought of the safety of the big company, his seniority and benefit privileges—but most of all his wife. She said she was willing for him to take a chance, but he read the signs of anxiety in her eyes and played safe.

Of course the company likes married men. Statistics show that they are not likely to quit. But it is the human rather than the statistical side that I know, for I talk every day with young men who still think they are going to step out for themselves one of these days, as soon as they get a little money ahead to protect their families. Their task is difficult. Hostages once given are not easily redeemed, and the married men always make up their minds to stay with the big business just one year longer.

IV

What about these men who have taken and are taking the path of the big business? At the top there are some who began work years ago as office boys, but these are of an old school; the type is passing. The order of the day is to recruit college men and, although office boys are supposed still to have the same opportunity, there is no denying that the future belongs to the graduates of colleges and technical schools.

And most of these who adopt the big business career impress me as being "average" men; that is, they are likable, normal young individuals who find it easy to adjust themselves to the routines of the office.

The secret of satisfaction in big business appears to lie in capacity for this particular sort of adjustment. Here is a friendly young fellow, for example. He is one of last year's graduates; he is still working for the initial salary, which is small, but he is living at home and has few large expenses. Most of what he earns is spent in keeping up a pleasant round of social activities. After all, he has about what he wants in the world; his standard of living is high, he has friends of congenial tastes and commensurate incomes, and he is satisfied to be working for a famous corporation.

The discords of the office are minor to this young man. He often suffers from boredom between the hours of nine and five and he is not much interested in the work he has to do; he thinks most of it is thoroughly unimportant, and almost all his prized ideas and suggestions have been turned down. On the other hand, the work is easily done, life is settled and pleasant, and it is comfortable to sit at a big desk and know that a pay check is coming regularly—a check that will increase with the years. This young man meets other young men around the building; they smoke cigarettes together, run out to lunch, consider themselves amiable and rising young men of business. So they are.

There is something to be envied, maybe, in having made at such an early age so neat an adaptation to life's problems. On the other hand, the very fact that such an adjustment is possible is, to a degree, a measure of a man's character. He cannot be outstanding in initiative, courage, or originality.

My friend the technical graduate is unhappy partly because he craves real work and partly because he does not live at home and must pay his own expenses. The starting salary which makes such adequate spending money for a young man about town is not at all sufficient for the needs of a man on his own resources who has serious interests in life. It subjects him to real privations.

In short, the limitations of young men are the very qualities which make them good recruits for the large corporation; like peas which will go through a sieve.

Again, there is the case of a young scientist who was employed by an exceedingly big business in an obscure and monotonous job in which he had, nevertheless, succeeded in perfecting a rather important electrical device. This invention was one of several which the great corporation handed out piecemeal to its various research departments to

be developed. The young man's name was never heard, for it was company policy to give credit to the company itself and never to an individual. Everything he might invent or discover while working for the company belonged forever to it; for him not even fame. He resigned and started all over again in a small and obscure business because he could not abandon individuality sufficiently to fit into the big organization—which continues to market a valuable product based upon his invention.

The company believes that the day of the eager but impoverished inventor, grinding away by himself in a crudely fitted laboratory, is gone forever. Inventions from now on will be produced by great organizations with tremendous resources and hundreds of laboratories filled with expensive apparatus. Problems will be subdivided and handed out to specialists in different fields, and the researches of these specialists will be brought together into new developments which will be the company's contribution to science and not the contribution of any man, or even any group of men. Therefore, a man who begins work for the company assigns any discovery he may make to the company before he enters upon his duties; he ceases to be an individual and becomes part of an organization, acknowledging in terms which will stand in the law that he owes to the company the inspiration and direction of his labors, the background and the resources which make them possible, and their fruits, whatever these may be. His name may sometimes be recorded on some patents as assignor to the company; but in so far as the company finds it possible, the public will be impressed with the fact that the company itself, and not an individual, perfected these inventions.

Now and then I come across an office boy whom I would sooner back to make a name for himself and a real contribution to the business than any of the college recruits. Despite his handicaps he has pressure enough behind him so that he must get ahead, somehow and somewhere; it is the pressure, I think, of hard experiences, of starved childhood, and of something in his character due to the environment from which he comes. He is alert, cynical, and master of himself. But he tells me that he is going to leave the company; no big business for him! This is, from another direction, corroboration of what I have observed about the young men in the company; they are to inherit success because they can remain satisfied.

Turning to the executives of the business, I try to consider them fairly. Conditions were different, of course, when many of them started to work for the company. But they are to-day what we are to consider ourselves lucky to be to-morrow.

One of the Vice Presidents interests me. I watched him at a sales conference a short time ago and was surprised to discover that, like all sales representatives, he carried a flask of synthetic gin, which he shared hospitably in his room between sessions. Now the surprising part is that this man twenty years ago would have considered drinking gin with a group of assorted salesmen in a hotel room as rather cheap and uninteresting.

He is himself, I think, when he is in the family circle; a man of considerable refinement who is fond of good books and once wanted to make a hobby of the science of education. I am not shocked that he should have his gin when he is out with the "boys," nor would this seem worth noting if it were just a concession to the worldly good-fellowship of a sales get-together. But it is not that. It is a genuine alteration of character; it is a symbol of what has happened in the course of twenty years to a very nice young man, not morally, but temperamentally and culturally.

For this man has little individuality now. He is a creation of big business, a factory-turned product of the life he has found it necessary—or at least easier—to lead in order to become a Vice Presi-

dent at twenty thousand a year. He made his way by being a friend to everyone; he learned to mix. Now he is a "back-slapper" extraordinary.

Every executive has used some technic to reach his particular eminence, and the technic in each case has greatly changed the man. This back-slapping Vice President lacked force. He thought of no way to revolutionize any department of the company, so he made himself the best-liked man in the general offices. He was quickly known to everyone and he seemed an important personality to those departments which had slight official contact with his. He impressed men in other companies. He built up the tradition that he was a valuable man. The only cost to him was that he found it friendly to play poker and to drink a little, to run around with some of the men whom he disliked or even despised, and to abandon any plans he may have had for his hours outside the office.

One of the Assistant Vice Presidents used a different system for obtaining advancement. He antagonized everyone. He kept all comers on the defensive. Once he had obtained his first promotion things were fairly easy. Everyone who dealt with him felt an implied accusation of incompetence and, conversely, came to look upon him as a forceful and able business man. Perhaps he is. But I am sure that he began by being afraid of his own ability and that he is ending at the top of the ladder because of his effect on other persons and not at all because of any merit in himself. Now his whole character has been changed by the role he has enacted; he too is a victim of his job.

The most common procedure adopted by young men who wish to get ahead faster is to seek for new ways of saying "yes." Tactful assent to the views of the superior officer will have, in time, great results. Therefore, the subordinate who can make his approval strong and still prevent his motive from being obvious is advancing himself.

V

Certainly the college graduate is justified in asking himself whether he must give up or revise all his interests in life to conform to the big-corporation type, the successful type. He soon learns that, at least, he must acquire a new language and new interests in addition to his own.

The cant of street loafers is more picturesque than that of business executives, yet there are some points at which the two may fairly be compared. A stranger might be lost in attempting to follow the conversation of either. The executive rarely says, "This is what I think." He says, "This is my thought," or "Here's my slant." He never exchanges opinions; it is always "getting together" with him and usually "getting together around the lunch table." Instead of saying "I want your opinion," he says "I want you to be in the picture," and he "tosses thoughts into the ring" and "irons out angles." These phrases were undoubtedly expressive and forceful when they were first used, but the constant repetition, the lack of originality, and the monotony are disheartening. They are symbolical of conventions which surround even the thinking of the business man.

It is not by accident that the business super-culture of a language and golf came into existence. The fact is that the men in the business have little in common except the business itself, and have created for themselves a world in which they can meet on equal ground.

It is a world of golf, the terminology of slants, pictures, and get-togethers, and a conventional attitude toward politics and progress. There is a business baptism into which divergent types of humankind plunge, to emerge good business men who can get on famously together. They leave themselves, their real character and tastes, beyond the pale and perhaps wisely confine themselves to what they can all understand and enjoy, even through a lifetime of office hours and periodic outings.

In the end, what would this life do to me? The environment is as unyielding as a stone wall; it is always the individual who must be altered.

VI

At times the colors in the portrait of the man I could be thirty years from now are exceedingly bright, but they always fade. I walk through the corridor of this seventeenth floor; the door of the Vice President's inner office is open. There he sits, the man I could be at even less than his age. Mahogany wainscoating, mahogany furniture surround him; a soft carpet is under his feet. A touch of his hand upon the buttons at his elbow will bring to him, scurrying, anyone he wants to see. But this is the smallest and most superficial sign of his power, for the operations which he is supposed to command are far-flung; they include fleets on the farther side of the world, salesmen in distant jungles, machines in huge factories, storehouses in many cities.

In theory he has power, but he will not use it. He will listen to long reports, reconcile differences, confirm decisions, and perhaps dream of the empire, so far-flung, which he can never see. He will sit with the other Vice Presidents and the President in a room which, after all, is not large, and they will try to keep the company at its steady pace.

As I stand for a moment in the hall, I see the Vice President rising from his chair. He yawns. He is going home early; his limousine is below. Perhaps he will have time for nine holes of golf before dark; but I doubt if he cares for that now, for his health has not been good and he tires easily.

There is magic in such a glimpse through an opened door. The wealth, the power, the ease, the peace with fate —all yours, the company is always whispering, all yours—in exchange for thirty years.

But no, it will not be mine. I must refuse to play safe. Weighing the price, I choose the risks of the outside world. So far as I am concerned, the problem is easy to solve. I shall leave the office in the high building, and even now all kinds of subconscious anticipations are prompting me. It is hard to live with one's subconsciousness in a large corporation!

I may find in smaller companies some of the things I do not like; but in the small business the individual is important. A struggling concern, the destiny of which has not yet been worked out, is by all odds the choice for a young man. If the business becomes big, he may be the one man who makes it big, or he may become big with it. He can identify himself with a fairly small group of men whom he likes, a group which he can influence and help to form. He can have ideas. Perhaps he can pioneer a bit. Whatever happens he can be himself.

There is all the difference in the world between being a member of a football team and a private in an army; team work, co-operation, subordination are necessary in either case, but with what a contrast! Such an illustration is, I think, the answer to anyone who maintains that small business has all the unpleasantness and rigor of big.

A small business may be anything from a corner store to an organization of some size; there is a limitless range and variety from which the college man may pick and choose. He may go where he likes, where impulse suggests, where he sees a vision, or where he divines a fortune. Even the choice is invigorating. The man who is struggling to support a family finds it difficult to turn from big business; the company holds him in many ways. And the man who plays it safe, or doesn't much care, or wants something soft—he, too, is for big business all his days. But to all the others big business seems to be saying nothing of importance when it proclaims "he started as a clerk" and proceeds to paint the portrait of a well-to-do executive, post-dated thirty years.

THE PERFECT JUROR

A STORY

BY MARGARET CULKIN BANNING

THE district attorney, Mr. Harvey Porter, passed his hand back over the sleek, oiled curve of his hair and ran through the formula.

"Now, Miss Monroe," he concluded, "do you know of any reason why, if chosen as a juror in this case, you should not be able to judge the matter fairly on the evidence as presented?"

"No, sir," said the girl.

"We accept the juror."

"The following will be the jurors in this case. The other members of the panel may report in courtroom number three," called the clerk of court, in his even, waveless voice.

He read the list off pompously, and the men and women who had been rejected as jurors rose to go to the other courtroom, a slight expression of chagrin on some of their faces.

"That Miss Monroe was chosen again. She never is scratched," said one woman to another as they went out. "She goes from one case to another. Of course, personally, I am very glad to be excused, especially from a bootlegging case; but I wonder why they always select such a young girl who can know so little of the world."

"Those lawyers are pretty clever. That's the kind they like, Mrs. Dowling. Someone told me they call her the perfect juror. I heard she's been on ten cases this term."

"Well," said the lady in blue foulard charitably, "she's very ignorant. She doesn't know anyone and she hasn't any opinion on anything. Personally, when I have an opinion I cannot keep it hid. I was glad to tell that Finn's attorney exactly where I stood on prohibition!"

Mrs. Dowling bridled with pride and remembered oratory. She had been scratched on all the bootlegging cases and had been retained on very few of any sort; but still at four dollars a day it was interesting to spend most of the day about the courthouse and pick up bits of news and sort out the women of the panel to gossip with. Courtroom number three swallowed her up temporarily.

Elsa Monroe put her soft felt hat in the locker in the jury room and took the high-backed chair which the bailiff indicated in the jury box. It was in the front row, and she was discovering after five weeks of jury duty that she did not like the front row. One had to stand the direct address of the attorneys who fixed their eyes so devastatingly upon the faces of members of the jury. It was too close to the action which was going on. Any movement seemed exaggerated into restlessness, any whisper seemed commotion.

She was a pretty, red-haired girl with a smooth, white face that told little and yet did not seem secretive, a face in which intelligence was pleasantly adequate without being raised to attack or intensity. The red hair lay in loose waves on the sides of her head and was caught into a knot at the back. She was neat in the manner of an expert stenographer and her dark-blue crêpe dress was firmly built and unwrinkled. From

her place in the jury box she looked across at the profile of the accused bootlegger, a Finn, with an inscrutable triangular face, sloping away from high cheekbones. He was still, still as those who do not comprehend can be sometimes in a kind of self-protection. Beside him sat his lawyer, a fat, heavy man, who made a business of defending such cases. The rest was usual: The tables, the court reporter, blinking under his green shade, the judge wearing the expression of routine and, back in the courtroom, shielded by rows of empty seats, a half dozen peering faces and slouching bodies, ill at ease, whispering now and then to one another and quickly stiffening when the eye of the judge rambled in their direction. There was a gnomelike little man with a queerly shriveled body, several uncouth, towheaded younger ones, and two women, one of them young, cheaply dressed in country clothes.

It was one more bootlegging case on a crowded calendar. The courtroom was empty of spectators, and the members of the jury settled down in their chairs to positions of as much comfort as was conformable with their dignity. In the back row, as Elsa Monroe knew, some of them would let their minds doze behind their empty eyes.

The prosecuting attorney, rising and moving to the rail of the jury box, began quietly and informally:

"This, ladies and gentlemen, is a very simple case, a clear-cut violation of the laws enacted against the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages. The defendant was apprehended in the sale of what is known as moonshine whiskey on certain definite occasions. We shall put the case before you without many words and by calling few witnesses. I only ask you, ladies and gentlemen, to remember that the prosecution of these cases by this office is not a matter of routine. This is a criminal offense!" His voice rang sharply for a minute and the strange green-blue of the Finn defendant's eyes blazed apprehensively. "A criminal offense cannot be regarded lightly. You men and women have been chosen to sit upon this case because we feel that you think this offense as serious as any other criminal case. I ask you to regard this as a matter of upholding the constitution of the United States to which you, I, and every citizen is personally pledged. I will show you that on certain occasions . . ."

He was brief as he had promised and Mr. Carson, the Finn's lawyer, almost equally so. He appealed to the members of the jury not to forget that a man was innocent until he was proved guilty, not to have or hold prejudice against a man because he could not speak the English language, to consider this case as exactly what it was—not a test of the prohibition amendment, but a question as to whether this man was innocent or guilty of selling liquor.

Both lawyers spoke rapidly, easily. Their words rolled out as if they had been used in the same places before, and their minds might have been on their dinners, salaries, or loves, so glib were the formulæ. The judge paid no attention to them. He looked over some papers on his desk and called the bailiff to him.

"We will call Gilbert Sorenson," announced the prosecution.

From his corner seat a tall shambling man rose and went to the witness chair. He moistened his lips and, finding himself too long for the chair, leaned forward, his hands pressed together between his knees. He was part of the formula too and as he acknowledged his name and his vague occupation, "employed by the county," his eyes roamed over the jury and settled appreciatively on Elsa Monroe's white skin until she stirred as if to shake him off.

"You know the defendant, Pikkanen?"

"Yes."

"When did you first see him?"

"Wednesday, August fourteenth, near Redwood."

"Tell the jury under what conditions you saw him."

"We heard," said the stool-pigeon,

"that there was liquor sold at Lahti's store, so we went up there that day and went in. This fellow was behind the counter there."

"What kind of a store?"

"Soft drinks—on the sign." The stool-pigeon grinned faintly.

"We object to the witness' interpolation," said the other attorney; "was it a soft drink parlor or not?"

"Is Lahti's a soft drink parlor?"

The witness lost his grin and said that it was.

"What did you buy there?"

"We asked him if we could get some moonshine. He said to wait a minute. Then he took us out to the shed and poured us two drinks."

"Drinks of what?"

"Moonshine whiskey."

"A liquid potable as a beverage and, if taken in sufficient quantities, likely to produce an intoxicating effect?"

"Yes, sir."

The answers knew the questions and the questions knew the answers. They almost met each other coming.

"Did you buy any liquor in bottles?"

"Not that day."

"Did you buy any later?"

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"We went back the next day and Pikkanen sold us two bottles."

The district attorney leaned forward and lifted a bottle from the table after his exhibits had been formally identified. It was a plain glass bottle labeled heavily and the contents had no color.

"Is this one of the bottles?"

"One of them."

"Is this the other?"

"Yes, sir."

He questioned the witness as to the labels, the time they were written, the identification.

"The state offers these exhibits in evidence."

As the attorney walked up to the court reporter to record the entry the Finn's blue eyes again lighted with the flame of interest. But his lawyer paid no attention. The huddled figures in the back of the courtroom might have been carved of stone by some great sculptor of peasantry, so still were they.

Gilbert Sorenson sat shiftily through the cross-examination, peppered with objections from the district attorney. He'd lived in the county a long time. Yes, he admitted he had been a bartender at one time. Well, for maybe seven, eight years.

"How do you know this is moonshine liquor? Did you taste it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Know the taste of moonshine, all right, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," Sorenson grinned sheepishly, his eyes wandering again to Elsa Monroe, who lifted a scornful chin.

"Just how drunk were you that night you say you went back to buy the liquor?" asked Mr. Carson abruptly.

"Object to the question as irrelevant and prejudicial to the witness and move it be stricken from the record."

Stricken it might be and was. But in the minds of the jurors worked doubt, as the attorney for the defense had known it would work.

Sorenson was followed by a still more unattractive person who had been with him that day, a pimply man with a complexion that looked as if it had sprouted in a cellar, dead white under his pimples. He too recognized the white liquid as intoxicating as a beverage, under the sneers of the attorney for the defense. His story was merely one of corroboration. It all sounded rehearsed to Elsa Monroe. One could see that the two men had been set on the Finn like a couple of hounds, and sniffing at their heels was another witness, the farmer's boy who had helped them, a shifty boy, less of the field than of the crossroads store, the strange product which is half rotten though it has always been exposed to sun and air. He said the Finns out there made liquor. Sure, everybody knew it. The judge turned sharply on him at that careless answer and the boy's words began to stiffen. When

they released him from the witness chair he was purplish red from anger and embarrassment and went to sit beside Sorenson and his friend and seemed to be muttering under his breath. The judge announced adjournment.

The district attorney, resuming the case at two o'clock, remarked briefly that his case was closed. The jury shifted in their seats. It was half over now and they'd finish the case possibly by mid-afternoon and have the rest of the day off.

"We call Oscar Pikkanen in his own defense," said Mr. Carson.

The Finn was taller than Elsa had thought. There was a litheness to his body, a kind of spring in his step that indicated health. He took the witness chair awkwardly and his shining blue eyes were fearful. Elsa felt a strange desire to say something to him, to say that nothing was decided yet, not to be so frightened.

"The witness will need an interpreter," said his attorney.

"If the court please," said the prosecution, "we prefer to see how much English this man can muster up if he tries."

The court frowned but he recognized the right of the county attorney.

"Try him on a few questions, Mr. Carson, and if he doesn't understand we can get the interpreter then. Have you one ready?"

"Just outside."

"Very good."

"What is your name?"

It was different on his own tongue from what it had been on the others. Pikkanen became a used, familiar word, not a harsh thing of quarreling consonants.

"You live where?"

"Near Redwood."

"How long have you been in this country?"

"Three years."

"What do you work at?"

"Farm."

"You own your farm?"

The witness rubbed the chair with his hands in dismay. His English was failing him. He fumbled through a question or two more.

"If the court please," suggested the attorney for the defense, in irritation, "it is quite clear that we need the interpreter."

"Call him," said the court.

But the interpreter was not a man. She was a woman, or possibly a girl, grave and blonde and with the grace of acquired education which comes sometimes to those who regard it seriously. The Finn stayed in the witness chair and she sat beside him, her intent face mindful of his answers and her repetition of them was in an English so pure and careful that it was a pleasure to hear her. The girl on the end of the jury box, whom the lawyers called the perfect juror, leaned forward. She liked to watch Miss Aklan and she was curiously grateful for the ease and friendliness which had come into the testimony through the interpreter.

Through Miss Aklan the Finn said that he had been working on a farm. It was the farm of his friend, who had written him to come to this country. He lived there with his friend. Moonshine, no they did not make it. The word moonshine came out of his own speech, a curious incongruous word in the middle of the Finnish, and the interpreter repeated it gravely though on her lips also it hardly seemed suitable. Sometimes he worked in Lahti's store, behind the counter. Lahti too had been a friend in Finland. He helped him. He was there on the fourteenth of August. On the fifteenth he had not been there. He had not sold liquor to the men who claimed that he had done so. No. He had been making hay on the farm. One must make hay on the farm. The extra help had all been needed. He had worked all day. It was three miles to the store. He drove the Ford of his employer sometimes and went in to help Lahti in the store when his work was done. Not that day. No.

The cross-examination of the witness through the interpreter was difficult. That was why the prosecuting attorney objected to interpreters. The shock of his swift questions was broken as it came through the suavity of the girl interpreter. He let Pikkanen go after establishing the fact that, even after he had made hay all day, there would still be time to get into town with the Ford and be at the Lahti store at the time the stool-pigeons had said they bought the liquor from him.

There was a brief low-voiced consultation of the lawyers on some admissible testimony and Elsa Monroe could hear the whisper of the man behind her to his neighbor.

"That bottle make you thirsty, Murphy?"

Murphy gave a half-hushed guffaw.

"Damned tantalizing," he answered.

The old man who owned the farm, Pikkanen's employer, was called to the stand. He was a gnarled old man whose body had been twisted by weather and ill-tended disease. His English was meager but he had enough to corroborate the story of the defendant and his eyes twisted around as he did it, not so much furtively as like the eyes of an animal in unfamiliar surroundings, fearful of danger.

Two other men, their faces black-brown from exposure, their English halting, testified that no moonshine was made near the place where they lived, and that Pikkanen had been at home on that day.

"Was he home the day before?" asked the district attorney?

They blundered. They did not know.

"Was he home the day after?"

That, too, they did not know.

"Yet you remember distinctly that on the fifteenth of August he was there?"

"Yes."

"You marked that special day off on your calendars, I suppose?"

They could not understand the reason for that query.

"Let it go," said the prosecution. It had been for the benefit of the jury anyway. Their testimony was too smooth, too organized. The old woman gave the same story.

"How do you remember the fifteenth of August?" the district attorney asked her.

"Yes," she said.

"Do you remember it because you and your husband and these other friends talked it over and decided all together to tell the same story to save Pikkanen?"

"Object," roared the defense's attorney.

The judge grew serious. He meditated.

"Objection overruled. She may answer."

A faint quiver went over the face of the interpreter as she repeated the question and the quiver was in Elsa's mind also. The old woman wouldn't know what the question meant.

"Yes," said the old woman in Finnish. She was a dull old woman and wanted to please and did her best.

The attorney for the prosecution grinned.

"That's all," he said cheerfully, and the jury members seemed to be tempted to smile with him. All but Elsa. She had been on motor-accident cases, trials involving money and bankruptcies, and even uglier things during this term, and none of them had hit deep in her mind like this one. She had an odd feeling that the thing was not quite clear, that someone should clearly bring out the fact that the Finns did not know the language, that from their whole manner they did not understand.

The defense called its last witness. She was the younger woman of the two and she had been in the country just a year. Yet the year had given her time enough to learn a little English. She had a Finnish face too, with a strange touch of Slav, smooth and withdrawn, and her blond braided hair twisted about her head. And she was frightened.

The questions were as they had been

to the others and the answers the same. The stories of the Finns held together almost too well. If they had differed a little it would have been better for them.

"You too remember the fifteenth of August?"

She nodded with a quick monosyllable.

"Was Pikkanen there on the fourteenth? During the whole evening?"

"I think so. I cannot be sure."

"How about the sixteenth?"

"I do not know."

"Yet the fifteenth of August is clear to you?"

"Yes."

"Will you explain to the jury your remarkable memory, which picks days out of the month and remembers them accurately after a lapse of three months and quite forgets what happened on days which preceded or followed?"

She looked at him helplessly. He looked back cruelly authoritative.

"I don't understand."

"Get the interpreter," said the prosecuting attorney.

The two young women sat side by side and into the interpreter's tone had come an unconscious gentleness as she repeated with little limited expressions of her hands what the lawyer had said. Into the face of the Finnish girl came a strange look of comprehension. She swallowed some emotion and her eyes went straight to the face of the defendant, whose blue eyes were fixed on her always.

"She says she remembers because it was a feast day."

"What feast day?"

"The feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin."

"A Catholic feast?"

"Yes."

"Isn't it strange for a Finn to be a Catholic?"

The girl talked rapidly, bewilderingly and yet with a certain reluctance and at last the interpreter took up the drama.

"She comes from the south of Finland and there are a few Finns there close to Russia who are still Catholics. She says that the Finns at the farm laughed at her, that she never went to mass but she prayed secretly on these days which are feast days. She says she remembers that day because she was asking the Blessed Virgin for a special favor."

"May we ask the favor?"

They were all intent, listening now. There was a pause. The defendant's lawyer, seeing sympathy wake for his witness, did not interfere.

The witness did not speak. The interpreter pressed her. Then the words came slowly as the red spread over the Finn girl's cheeks.

"She asked that the defendant might be able to marry her soon."

"That's all."

Elsa watched the girl go back to her place without a glance at Pikkanen. But she had caught too that glorious look of love which swept his face as he heard her testimony and half rose from his seat. She turned her eyes from him.

"After this little romance," said the prosecution, standing before the jury box and beginning his talk, "we will proceed with the summary of facts. I assume the matter is clear to all of you as it certainly is clear to me. These people, at least old Niemi, owns a farm. They are clannish, these Finnish people. They come to this country eager for its privileges and without regard for its laws. They have taken up land. They are allowed the freedom of the greatest republic on the face of the earth. Yet how do they repay us? Four of these witnesses cannot speak the English language. Four of them have not been naturalized. They have such contempt for the laws of the country that they manufacture and sell liquor. These men who found them out are agents, if you will. We must have agents to maintain this law of ours. But our agents have no grudges. They have nothing to gain by incriminating the innocent. As the farmer's lad said, it is known well that the Finns around Redwood make liquor and that these little country stores market it. Pikkanen did farm. Well and good. He also took the moonshine

into Lahti's store and sold it. Ole Neimi, the farmer, knew that. Back of these farms on waste acres we have discovered stills before. We have tried in the interest of the law-abiding public to break up this notorious traffic and we are succeeding. They oppose us. They have given you this rehearsed cock and bull story about remembering where Pikkanen was every hour on the fifteenth of August. Search your memories, ladies and gentlemen! Where was each of you on August fifteenth? Can you remember? I don't question the honesty of some of these boys. They may be hypnotized into believing that they do remember what happened on that day. But I say it is unlikely, improbable that all of them could. I go far enough to say it is impossible. As for this poor girl, her testimony is that of a man's sweetheart. One must not credit it unduly. Even if she thinks she speaks the truth, do you yourself think it credible that a girl could tell exactly where a man is every hour? Perhaps he went to town for two hours while she was washing dishes, just long enough to help out Lahti while he went home to supper, just to sell this liquor. Ladies and gentlemen, I am not prosecuting the Finnish nation. I have nothing to gain from this case. I am in a measure ourselves, the American people, demanding that the laws enacted shall be respected by foreigners who come to make this their home. The bottles do not lie. They are labeled circumstantial evidence. When you take them with you to the jury room you will personally read the labels affixed by disinterested agents last August and instantly remanded to this office. I ask your support in teaching these people law abiding and law enforcement, and for the sake of a salutary and absolutely necessary lesson let there be no error in your verdict of guilty."

He talked well. The district attorney was noted for his good talks. He was often toastmaster at banquets, orator at the opening or dedication of some building. He retired with a smile as if he smacked his lips over his own speech, and the judge again adjourned court. It was five o'clock and the afternoon had slipped by so quickly that Elsa Monroe had not dreamed it was so late.

Some of the others felt differently as they went down in the elevator with her.

"Dragged it out, didn't they?" asked a man of Elsa. "Well, we'll get the case before noon to-morrow anyway. And maybe we'll get the afternoon off. Ever see anything like the way those Finns hold together?"

Elsa only looked at him. She couldn't think of anything to say. Her words never came easily. She only knew that she was disturbed and worried and would be glad to see Fred.

Outside the courthouse on the steps she saw the Finns. The men were talking but the girl stood a little apart. Her eyes were turned toward the building across the way where the windows were barred and a look of horror was on her face. In the late afternoon the sun made her hair golden where it showed beneath the lace shawl she wore over it and there was something virginal and enduring about her.

Elsa's friend took her out to dinner. Fred was good-looking in his city way. He wore the clothes one saw in the windows of big clothing stores in the manner the wax figures wore them and he smiled with a cigarette-advertisement smile of pleasure.

"Getting your money easy these days, aren't you, Elsa?" he asked, "pretty soft to pull down four berries a day for sitting and deciding who'll go to jail and who won't."

"It's not always jail and it's not always easy."

"The way I feel about it is that birds who get in courtroom deserve just about what's coming to them."

"But that doesn't mean anything, Fred. There are two sides."

Fred cut his steak masterfully.

"You can pretty nearly always tell

who's right," he said largely; "anyway, as I say, people who get that far deserve to take a chance. People ought to keep the law and keep out of court."

Elsa's plate was neglected. She sat staring at the wall of the little booth in which they were eating.

"Say, you haven't any appetite at all, girlie. You mustn't worry about that stuff. How about a little snort of something to put some pep into you?"

"What?"

Fred tapped his pocket.

"I got some pretty good stuff to-day."

He pulled out a little silver-plated flask.

"This will put the ginger in you."

"No, thanks," said Elsa.

"Better have some."

"No. Where'd you get it, Fred?"

"Oh, from a fellow. It's not so hard. Prices are coming down too, do you know that? I think before long we'll be getting this stuff at pretty near before prohibition prices. Fact." He poured himself a drink in his glass. "Of course the quality isn't what it used to be but it's pretty darn good at that."

She watched him curiously as he swallowed the drink and breathed hard in his satisfaction.

"Who makes it?" she asked.

"You don't really know. The fellow who made that knows his business. Some of these foreigners who made it in the old country have a pretty good knack. Sure you won't?"

"I wish you wouldn't, either."

"Say, girlie, I don't drink enough to hurt me. Ever see me drunk?"

"No."

"And you never will, believe me. I haven't got any patience with these souses. A fellow's got to have control, that's all. A drink now and then is different from steady drinking, Elsa."

"It's the principle, isn't it? Don't the people who make it get in trouble?"

Fred grinned. "That's their problem," he said, "precious few of them get caught and they get their money out of it. Say, dearie, you do look tired. What's the case to-day?"

She shook her head.

"We're under orders not to talk about them, Fred. Not until the cases are over. You know."

"Well, you mustn't let them wear you out or I'll have to go beat up that judge, that's all." He put his hand across the table and patted hers and she felt the little usual thrill run through her. "Come, we'll go see the best movie in town."

When the case of the State against Oscar Pikkanen was resumed in the morning it was as if they had all held their poses. Elsa Monroe in a yellow flannel dress on the end of the jury box was like a serene daffodil. The man beside her, a disgruntled manufacturer, serving his time to be done with it, slouched in his seat and on the other side a keen-faced matron lifted an aging chin out of her collar. The judge wore the same tie. The stool-pigeons lounged together in case of redirect examination or question of any sort. The attorneys held their places, the same papers spread out before them, and on the table two bottles, full of a colorless liquid, were standing. In the same places in the courtroom sat the Finns. Elsa wondered where they had spent the night, in what cheaply rented bed somewhere that Finnish girl had lain, perhaps whispering a prayer to the saints she did not worship publicly.

Her eyes were hollowed to-day and the look of patience in her face overcast by fear. Elsa saw the defendant's eyes meet those of the Finn girl and hold them for a minute. How still their emotion was.

There was an air of wanting to get through with it. The defendant's lawyer rose on call of the court and sauntered to the jury box, loose fat hands thrust in his pockets.

"Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I appeal to you in behalf of an unhappy foreigner, a childlike ward of this country, who is misjudged."

He was inadequate. He was senti-

mental and trite. He might have used the same talk dozens of times at fifty dollars a recital, thought Elsa in irritation. The Finn's eyes were on his lawyer, eagerly, devotedly. In the back of the room the other foreigners strained to catch what words they might, sculptured now in the idea of hope. And Elsa could feel with that jury sense of hers, which had developed in the past weeks, how Mr. Carson was failing to convince the men and women who listened to him. She was glad when he was done and the judge, turning formally to the jury, addressed them in short curt sentences.

"You must judge this on the evidence. If you are convinced that this man sold the liquor no sympathy must sway you. This is a serious offense, as serious as any other criminal offense. You must judge of the credibility of the witnesses as best you can. You will retire to the jury room and elect one of your number to be your foreman and deliberate on your verdict."

The jury room, council and judgment room, was warm and bright. Around the long polished oak table were the chairs, comfortable and broad armed. The jury, left to itself, relaxed into that intimacy and amusement which was inevitable, everyone avoiding the chair at the head of the table which might be the foreman's.

"Shall we lunch on the county—that's the question," chuckled someone, half jocosely.

The bailiff, entering, brought in the two glass bottles.

"Here's lunch," said someone and there was a roar of laughter. Elsa did not laugh. One reason she could not was because she had turned to see the girl again as she went out of the courtroom and caught her tragic look of fear, helpless fear. There was nothing she could do, that was what the look meant.

"Miss Monroe would make a charming foreman," said one of the gallant gentlemen.

"No, I couldn't," said Elsa, sharply, "no, I won't."

A pudgy gentleman said he thought the fairest way was to draw lots.

"Takes too much time. You be foreman."

That was the pudgy gentleman's secret notion. It took little urging to get him seated at the head of the table where an ominous air of importance came over him. The others settled into places here and there.

"Well, the first thing to do is to take an informal ballot."

"Look at these bottles. That's the way they do them up." A man lifted and shook them. "Looks like good stuff."

His wink was knowing and furtive.

"Maybe it's just water. Been in the district attorney's office a long while."

"Are we supposed to open them?"

"Sure, we're supposed to open them."

"Say, Mr. Foreman, how about it? Do we open these bottles and decide for ourselves?"

There were three women and nine men on the jury. The two women beside Elsa were the matron with the high collar and a gay, rouged plump young woman who had been on several juries with Elsa.

"I'll bet you men are pretty good judges of whether it's good or not," she said coyly.

"The women are getting to be good judges too," said one of the men, and that brought on another laugh.

"Let's get to business, Mr. Foreman," said the impatient manufacturer, eager to be back at his office.

The informal ballot was taken and Elsa, one of the tellers, counted it. Ten for conviction, two for acquittal. She wondered who the other one was.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen, in the minds of the majority the case seems to be pretty clear. I wonder if these two who believe in acquittal would just tell us why they feel as they do," said the foreman with a large air of being ready to hear all sides.

No one spoke at first. Then the high-collared matron broke silence.

"I didn't like the look of those stool-

pigeons," she said; "seems to me they're the worst of the lot. Everyone knows what kind of people they are. That man admitted that he had been bartender in Morrison's saloon. I know all about Morrison's saloon. It was two blocks from my home. I didn't like the look of that man from the first, and that Morrison's saloon was an open scandal!"

"Still, Mrs. Dallas, he'd have no reason for framing the Finn."

"I think the district attorney ought not to hire men of that character," said Mrs. Dallas obstinately.

"But we've got the evidence."

That reopened the question of whether the bottles should be tested and a rather heated argument ensued ending by one of the men producing a small bottle opener on a keychain.

"Say the word, gentlemen," he suggested.

"Go ahead," said the foreman.

The top of the bottle was nipped off and the man who did it smelled appreciatively.

"That's not water, believe me. Gosh, that stuff has a kick!"

Elsa saw three men lean toward it interestedly.

"Those Finns know how all right," said someone smelling it.

"Try it."

"Well, in the interest of justice."

"That's real stuff."

"No poison that. There was a fellow down street who had some liquor and it was like dynamite."

The smacking of lips, the air of knowledge, of camaraderie seemed to blend all the men in Elsa's eyes. They did not drink the liquor. It was only a touch of the tongue, a few drops.

"Powerful stuff. That ought to be good for a jail term all right, all right."

"Well, gentlemen, suppose we get to business. I appreciate that Mrs. Dallas' feeling may in a measure be right. But at the same time, it isn't a question of whether we like the stool-pigeon or not. It's a question of evidence. These bottles were bought and dated. The Finns told too smooth a story for anyone to credit. Don't you feel that yourself, Mrs. Dallas? How could they remember every minute of the fifteenth? Did you notice how the Finn's attorney slid over that point in his final talk? In my mind there's no doubt. Pikkanen sold the liquor and is liable for the penalty."

"The thing I object to," said Mrs. Dallas in a weakening voice, "is the man's character!"

"Waiving that—"

Elsa sat rigid. Her feet were cold and her hands hot. In all the other cases she had been on it had been so clear, so easy to be reasonable. But now—she looked back in her mind desperately. Where had she been on the fifteenth of August? She didn't know except that it was the week before her vacation. The old Finnish woman had said they all got together and talked it over. Yet for these men, sniffing at their liquor, for Fred with his flask, to sit in judgment on this trapped Finn whose girl had prayed and looked at the bars in horror was somehow hideous. It was confused and topsy-turvy.

"Who else felt the Finn was not guilty?"

No one spoke.

"Let's take another ballot and see if the minds have changed after this discussion."

They had. It was eleven to one. Elsa stood alone.

"Now, if this gentleman or lady will discuss their feeling in the case," said the foreman.

Elsa spoke. Her tongue seemed to stick as she did so.

"I can't discuss it. I was the other person who voted for acquittal. I feel it isn't fair."

"Fair?"

"You all buy the liquor, use it—you all break the law—why doesn't everyone go to jail? He doesn't even understand English—he's just learned that prohibition is one law no one obeys. It isn't fair to send him to jail for following the spirit of law breaking that he feels

everywhere. It's not fair to him or that girl to brand them!"

"We mustn't be sentimental, Miss Monroe, you know. You mustn't let your pity for the man's sweetheart sway you."

"Those Finns are pretty tough stuff."

"It's we who are tough!" said Elsa, "it's we who are creating the whole situation."

A man sighed heavily.

"We're not here to discuss the liquor laws, as I see it, young lady. We're sent here to decide whether this Finn sold liquor on the fifteenth of August or not. Personally, I believe he did."

Elsa turned a flaming face on him.

"So do I!" she said, "but I feel more criminal in sending him to jail than he did when he sold it. And so should you!"

There was an embarrassed hush.

"Suppose we take another ballot," said someone smoothly, "if Miss Monroe feels he is guilty, I hardly see how her other opinions affect the issue. I hardly see how she can possibly vote any way except for a conviction."

"You see that, don't you, Miss Monroe?"

Elsa did not answer. She saw. She saw the futility of her protest, trapped in the immediate situation.

"She was a damned good juror on other cases I've been on with her," whispered one man to another, "aren't women funny when it comes to liquor? They don't see straight at all."

"I move we have another ballot."

Elsa's fingers were stiff. The letters she wrote did not seem like her own. There was no use.

"Guilty," she wrote.

"Well, I guess we buy our own lunches. Wish we could take the exhibits along," said a jovial relieved gentleman.

The foreman nudged him to be silent, looking at Elsa, whose head was bent. When they moved back into the courtroom she tried not to look at Pikkanen but she was driven to do it by some force within her. His eyes dilated a little but he did not move. Only the Finn girl's hands rose in a kind of maddened protest and then her head dropped on them. The bailiff led Pikkanen away.

"You want to be excused, do you?" said the judge who had charge of the jury panel a half hour later. "Well, you've served very faithfully, Miss Monroe. I understand you've been an excellent juror. Tired out or what?" He looked at her quizzically and kindly because she was so pretty. "Don't you like administering justice?"

"I haven't been administering justice," said Elsa, "it was the law—not justice."

"Why, my dear young lady, that's a strange statement!"

"Oh, let me go," cried Elsa, "I'm tired. I'm tired!"

The judge, recounting the breakdown of the perfect juror, said that was the trouble with women, on juries especially. They couldn't stand the strain of a full term.

Fred said indignantly that they had worn her out. He said that when she was his wife she never would be allowed to serve on a jury, on all those dirty cases, listening to things a woman shouldn't hear. He asked her if she would like a little bracer, that he had some real good stuff, and could not understand it when she burst into tears.

But Mrs. Dowling, drifting from courtroom to courtroom, whispered the news that Miss Monroe had been dropped from the jury and that she understood that the judge had refused to let her serve any longer. What could you expect of a girl like that anyway, a girl with no experience of life, she asked.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION

AS AN ENGLISH CRITIC SEES IT

BY J. B. PRIESTLEY

AS A reviewer and literary adviser to a publishing house it has been both my duty, and sometimes my pleasure, to read a great many American novels. They have not been in any way marked off from the English novels I have read, but have simply been part of the common stream of fiction, so that my attitude toward them has not been different from my attitude toward our English novels. Nor is any criticism I may make of modern American fiction the result of a direct comparison with modern English fiction. There must be comparison with something, obviously, but it is a comparison not with modern English fiction but with fiction in general. Actually, I think America is, on the whole, far too kind to English novels and makes far too much fuss of, and gives too much money to our third-rate writers.

An American editor who asked me to write a series of articles on the leading authors of the day gave me an extraordinary list of second- and third-rate persons as his idea of such novelists. On the other hand he frankly confessed, on my putting forward some suggestions of my own, that neither he nor his readers knew anything about E. M. Forster, for example. All this is a great pity because, in the last resort, though there are two nationalities there is only one literature, so that all the literature written in the English language—whether it is produced in Sussex or Illinois, Manchester or New Orleans—is one literature. The holds of Atlantic liners should be stuffed with literary criticism as well as bales of goods and specie. Criticism is always a risky business, luring a man on to write himself an ass, and criticism at such a distance is nothing less than foolhardy. But it is worth doing, even though the corpse of one's reputation should be afterwards discovered floating on the waves of the intervening Atlantic.

II

It is precisely because America is such an excellent country for the bad novelist, the mere grocer of fiction, that it proves such a difficult country for the good novelist, the sincere artist. I am not writing now of money and taste, the quality of the magazines, and so forth; I am referring to the country itself. At first sight America seems an ideal place for the writer of fiction. It is at once vast and varied, including within its colossal boundaries all manner of people, scenery, climate, and so on. Whole communities are shut off from their neighbors and they develop manners, customs, tricks of speech all their own. The novelist is free to range from the extreme sophistication of New York and Chicago to the extreme unsophistication of the rural and even primitive communities of the mountains and the deserts. The population itself is the most varied on the face of the earth. Every nationality is represented in the great cities—all rapidly becoming American but all still retaining something of their language and customs—so that New York,

for example, is a fascinating kaleidoscope, a fancy-dress ball of the nations, a new Arabian Nights setting. It is this aspect of American life that O. Henry exploited so artfully. Compared with America, England and France are nothing but mere parishes, and the whole of Europe can hardly show such apparent variety. Here then, it would seem, is the novelist's paradise, for half his work is done for him. So long as he moves about and keeps his eyes open he can never run short of excellent material.

But this variety, while it will help any man to boil his pot, is nothing better than a snare for the more serious writer. It lures him away from the fundamental variety in individuals which is the delight of the dramatic artist. It is, after all, a superficial variety—a mere matter of accent, wigs, and costume. No doubt it is an excellent thing to express, as it were, the soul of a district, but when this is compared with expressing the soul of humanity it is no more than a kind of dramatic geography. It is well to bear in mind the immense difference between a New Englander and a Kentuckian; it is even better, if you are a novelist, to notice the immense difference between your neighbors on either side—Smith and Brown. But why, it may be asked, should we not do both? It is possible to do both, but it is very difficult. We like to take the line of least resistance, and the line of least resistance for the American novelist was the exploitation of what is called "local color," a kind of tourist literature. There was good work accomplished here; the names of such novelists as George Washington Cable, Thomas Nelson Page, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, James Lane Allen, Alice Brown are clearly not to be despised; but the general effect was bad. America made things too easy for her chroniclers, and they suffered for it. Too many turned out the same story dressed in different wigs and costumes and with changed scenery. Their real interest in human beings—human beings anywhere and everywhere, Hamlet and Falstaff and Madam Bovary and Anna Karenina—evaporated while they were taking notes on the local conditions, remarking the quaint whiskers and the quainter phrases. They concentrated on the wrong things and turned themselves and their readers into gaping tourists.

At this point some indignant patriot, unable to contain himself any longer, will remind us that the cult of "local color" is by no means confined to America; that there exists a topographical school of novelists in England which might, if necessary, claim no less a writer than Hardy as one of its leading members, even its founder. But only his most foolish admirers emphasize the local element in Hardy's work (or in any other author's) and Hardy is a great novelist not because of but in spite of his local color. Hardy more than counterbalanced this superficial appeal of Wessex by deliberately making his work the vehicle of a definite philosophy, showing us very plainly that he was writing about the universe and not merely about Wessex. There never was a writer less likely to be lured away by mere accidental differences—things glittering on the surface of life—than Hardy, who is forever poking about among its roots.

III

But if the superficial variety of American life and character is bad for the novelist, so too—perhaps even worse—is its real monotony. This monotony is the result of a habit of mind that will not allow free play of ideas. Originality is a kind of disease. Everybody must act and talk and think like everybody else. The class system is swept away but the resulting freedom is nothing but an illusion, because a democracy, disliking everything above its own flat level, has taken the power in its hands and used its weapon of defense and offense as a kind of hard pressure as intolerable as the knout.

It is not my business here to say what this democracy thinks, but it certainly

has a definite point of view. Dr. Frank Crane, I gather, may be taken as its prophet. Actually, it does not matter in this place what it thinks, whether it is largely right or largely wrong; the point is that it has a definite creed, a hundred-per-cent American affair which it tries very hard to make all members of its society accept. If you accept it, as most popular American writers do, then you cease to think for yourself and automatically become a purveyor of claptrap.

But unfortunately there are a number of writers, particularly among the younger novelists, who very decisively reject this creed; who are and have long been in a definite state of revolt. A freer air would have made them critical, but the pressure of public opinion, the tyranny of the mass has made them into rebels. This is a very healthy sign, and if we were simply discussing national life we could afford to applaud such rebellious spirits. Unfortunately we are discussing fiction, and it happens that this attitude of mind is not a healthy one for the writer of fiction. Revolt is one thing and dramatic art another and, though we may hold (as I do) that both are necessary in this world, we must not be blind to the fact that the mood of one is apt to destroy the mood of the other.

The American novelist (particularly the younger American novelist), having come safely past the siren song of the local cult, is faced with the Scylla and Charybdis of crude acceptance and crude revolt. If he is an intelligent, courageous fellow he chooses revolt and no doubt contrives to do some good in the world. But he is far from the attitude of mind which produces great fiction. On a somewhat higher level he is committing the same fault that is discovered in the local colorist: he is sacrificing character to background. And that, to my mind, is the besetting sin or weakness of contemporary American fiction, whose authors have a primary interest in backgrounds of all kinds and only a secondary interest in human character. Conditions have not allowed them to adopt that attitude—at once passionate, sympathetic, and yet detached—which is the only one for the dramatic literary artist whose business it is to create. Either the superficial variety of American life keeps them on the colored surfaces, or the pressure of the creed with its distrust of free play of ideas compels them to become social rebels. Only a few here and there are able to fall into the mood of the creative artist—to explore human character, to see life passionately and yet with detachment, refusing none of the creatures their sympathy.

The stock intelligent American novel is that, I imagine, of the kind written some time ago by Robert Herrick and now by Floyd Dell. It is a somewhat long and rambling chronicle of a girl (sometimes it is a boy, but more often a girl) who is born and bred in a small town where everyone is very dull and very stupid. Everyone, of course, is not very dull and stupid (as we should discover if a Dickens or a Tolstoy were looking at such personages) but that is the trouble about being a social rebel with a thesis—you have to prove your thesis. The girl has ambition and some glimmering of ideas and these are frowned upon, but finally, after contriving to read in secret a few intelligent books (written by other social rebels—Shaw and Wells are the first favorites), she manages to escape to college. Once there she discovers, to her surprise, that dullness and stupidity still reign. But there is usually one professor who is a rebel too, and is very clearly nothing but the author's mouthpiece, and he is driven away by the college authorities, who also point out to our heroine that she must mend her ways. After leaving college she suddenly decides to marry one of the dullest and stupidest men she has met. They settle in a small town where the young wife is regarded with suspicion because she smokes or plays Scriabine or talks philosophy with the

local doctor. Even her husband, now revealed in his true absence of colors, joins the enemy—at which our heroine draws out her two hundred dollars from the bank and runs away to New York for a career of some kind. We suspect that she will become the mistress of the brilliant and very rebellious short-story writer who met her for an hour or so when he visited college, seventeen chapters ago, and invited her to call on him whenever she decided to "throw it all up and come to New York." The last words of the story are usually "She peered through the window and saw a new dawn breaking" or "The train roared out into the night."

There are endless variations, in some of which the girl is defeated and remains at home. But it is more or less the same chronicle—long, shapeless, undramatic, lacking distinction, and hardly containing a single arresting moment or a character that ever seizes hold of the imagination. As social criticism it may not be without value; but as a work of art, a contribution to fiction, it is the flimsiest stuff. Time after time this story turns up—now a boy, now a girl, with assorted states and colleges—but essentially the same egotistical prattle, as much a formula as the stock idiocies and the quaint lovable village or the get-rich-quick stories on the other side. This may be described as the stock fiction of crude revolt, a state of mind in which the young writer is not looking at the show of life with passion, wonder, pity, and delight—living richly with his creatures—but is still, in his heart of hearts, merely anxious to shock the dean of his late college.

IV

Even when we leave obvious examples of what one American critic has called "the revolt from the village" school of fiction and come to work of considerable force, we still find the novelist cramped by his topsy-turvy interest. He cannot help becoming excited about the background—it may be of ordinary social conditions, or of ideas, or of romantic decoration masquerading as historical color—and emphasizing it at the expense of his characters. Even Dreiser, who can create character (after the most revolting birth pangs) is too interested in the grim pageantry of his great cities to be willing or able to focus a clear light upon his central figures.

That this is a specific American weakness can be illustrated by a comparison between two men who have often been compared—D. H. Lawrence and Sherwood Anderson. Both these writers are obsessed by the sexual element in life and, while keeping an appearance of strict realism, really aim at describing a world in which the dark promptings of the unconscious mind are immediately translated into action. The people who like one of them also like the other, and the mass of readers who find one detestable and obscene likewise find the other the same. But considered strictly as novelists, creative artists, there is one plain difference between them. Lawrence, with all his faults, can create character, can give us personages that have enormous vitality and, whether we like them or not, do force themselves into our imagination and live there. It is this ability that is his salvation as a novelist; it enables us to swallow his innumerable pages of bad writing, sloppy thought, nonsensical philosophizing. Anderson, on the other hand, is still preoccupied with background and never succeeds in creating human beings of such vitality. Living in a vast country in which the physical being is but a speck against illimitable plains and the individual judgment is a tiny piece of driftwood on the enormous stream of public opinion, he has had a harder task than Lawrence—he is an individualist in a country of individualists. But the whole purpose of this examination is to show that the American novelist has a harder task, and that when at last he does succeed, his will be the greater triumph.

Even the romantics show the same

fault. Cabell makes his work the vehicle of a certain philosophy and does not attempt to write fiction of the common kind. But even with him the effect would be greater if his fantastic, romantic, highly decorated background did not make his protagonists seem little better than pale flickering shadows. Again, the work of that excellent writer Joseph Hergesheimer reminds me of nothing so much as of those ballets of Loie Fuller, who would group a number of figures on the stage and then have colored lights flooded upon them and their waving draperies. Hergesheimer's figures and situations are nearly always the same; the only difference between one book and another is that provided by the colored lights of his style, draining each period dry of its essence of romantic color and fragrance. So, too, Booth Tarkington when he is not writing (somewhat too easily) about boys, is clearly busy setting the stage for a fancy-dress ball (Eighteenth Century) or a fascinating interior in Indiana, in the hope that his audience will not observe his figures too narrowly. And the irony of it all is that once an American does succeed in forgetting the background and concentrating all his attention upon his character, he immediately achieves all that he ever wanted to achieve; that is, he not only succeeds in creating a work of art—he also succeeds in drawing our attention, in the way he has long wished to do, to the background itself.

Thus Willa Cather, in at least two novels, has been successful in escaping from the curse of American fiction. She has created character first and background afterward. She did it in *My Antonia* and she has done it more recently in that exquisite little story, *A Lost Lady*. This last novel is not only a fine work of art; it is what so many novels have sacrificed everything to be and then failed, namely, a convincing picture of an American background, a whole period of American life caught in a few chapters. It is distinctively American. Almost as much, though it is less art, could be said of Zona Gale's *Miss Lulu Bett*, in which she succeeds in riveting her and our attention upon her central figure, and having done that all the rest followed—the whole background of American life was suggested and criticized. An even better example is Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*, which has attracted far more attention than his *Main Street* for the very sound reason that it is a much better piece of work. Sinclair Lewis, like the Wells he so obviously admires, is a creative artist almost in spite of himself. *Babbitt* was begun (and finished, for all I know to the contrary) as a piece of social criticism of the usual kind; the history of Babbitt was undertaken in order that we should see the background of Zenith; it is Zenith that is his prey; but Lewis, taking fire, was soon creating in the old way with the result that it is Babbitt himself who gives life to the book. Though we may not care a fig for the Middle West and all its cities—may not care whether they are good, bad, or indifferent, may not trouble ourselves one whit whether they hound out all citizens with ideas of their own or promptly make them into local heroes—Babbitt himself, a fellow creature, a friend and brother, we cannot resist.

And (this is the secret) once he has captured our imagination all the rest follows; we *do* care about the condition of the Middle West cities and whatever else our author wishes us to care about. America, I repeat, makes it hard for her novelists to approach their matter in the right way, the only way if a work of art is to be produced. She draws so many fascinating red herrings—romantic topography, history, social criticism, and the rest—across the novelist's trail that he is more than likely to turn his back upon his legitimate prey: the individual body, mind, and soul—the human being. If he will only press forward and not turn aside, everything will be granted him. He will express not only the soul of Smith and Brown, Babbitt and Marian Forrester, but also the soul of America.

JUNGLE SURVIVAL

BY JOHN W. VANDERCOOK

FOR nearly five hundred years the conquering white races from the north have sought to make empire of the girdle of the world. To-day the failure is still complete. The tropics are still empty and untroubled, except for a few isolated communities that continue to wring a meager subsistence from the land. Angry and disappointed, we have whined excuses for centuries: "The tropics are too hot." "The tropics are unhealthy. White men can't live there." Only the last is true. The sun is seldom so violent as it often is in summertime in New York, and disease is no more prevalent there than in London. There is another explanation—the jungle.

No race can survive within the tropics that has not been born to the ancient ways of forest survival. The white race does not and can never know them. It is a mode of life too foreign to our experience and temperament. But the jungle has been the home of the black always. He will survive there and increase forever. In the tropics the negro is pre-eminently the superior race.

The Dutch colony of Surinaame on the north coast of South America is not commercially successful. The home government pays a huge deficit each year for its support. A dozen times momentarily profitable agricultural industries have been wiped out by plague or a changing economic situation. Suriname, of course, has its successful men, but few of them are white. If you would find success there in the general business of life you must not look for it in the coastal towns. You must go back into the jungles where the Bushnegroes live.

The Bushnegroes are the pure-blooded descendants of West African slaves who rebelled against their masters in Suriname in the latter years of the eighteenth century. They returned to jungles like those they had left behind and at once renewed the knowledge and the ways of life that make survival in the tropic jungles successful and happy. Nearly a hundred and fifty years of separation from the memories of Africa had not been enough to sever them. The magic, the mystery, the society, the wisdom, and culture of the black men were reborn and they have continued in unhindered growth ever since. The Bushnegroes to-day are masters of a vast territory of unexplored forest far behind the towns along the coast. Untroubled, they work out their own salvation and they know there is no salvation beyond the day, if the day is spent in laughter and wisdom and peace.

If you would go to their villages you must have their permission and help. The jungles which cover Suriname are impassable, if you except the arduous method of slashing your way through them with a heavy knife at the rate of two miles a day. There are no trails. The only recourse is to travel one of the many rivers that divide the colony. But here again you encounter a difficulty with which white men are unable to cope. A steam launch will carry you back country a little way, but before long the plain of the continent rises toward the brow of mountains far inland and the rapids begin. Though the rivers are wide the torrents they make are fierce and rocky and dangerous. No engine

has yet been devised that will make headway against their current. Even if one were found, your heavy craft would immediately be splintered by the rocks and you would be swirled down to drown. You must either turn back—or ask the Bushnegroes' help.

They can afford to be generous. They know that, whatever Queen Wilhelmina may say, this is their country, that so long as you are there, you exist upon their sufferance. If for any reason they withdraw their help, you are done for. The rapids are simply a detail of the sinister antagonism of a land where they alone have learned to live.

The rivers are the only roads of communication. The Bushnegroes traverse them with as little trouble and concern as we follow a boulevard. They construct their vessels out of enormous trees which are hewn and burnt out until the shape of a long shallow canoe is achieved. This is hardened by fire, warped by steam, and modeled with an adz. When a corial, as it is called, is finished its grace is exceeded only by its utility. Every Bushnegro has his own. All can manage them.

My wife and I traveled in this fashion many times between Bushnegro villages far in the interior of Suriname. It never grew dull. When we were safely cramped amidships on the narrow staves that serve the purpose of seats, the Bushnegro boatmen, naked except for a colorful cotton loin cloth, their sweating bodies gleaming in the vivid sun, urged the corial with their carved paddles into the center of the mud-yellow river. Their splendid muscles would flex and start with the rhythm of their work. As they paddled they talked and laughed, totally unconscious of effort. The talk would not cease nor the easy mood change when white water about black rocks showed we had come to a fall. By common knowledge both men would steer to a certain point at the head of the rapid and send us in with a vigorous movement. While we clung to the almost submerged thwarts and shot downward at express speed, gaunt rocks and deadly whirlpools seemed to loom ahead every instant. But each was avoided by a skillful twist of the paddle and we were carried always into still swifter water. The Bushnegroes continued their conversation uninterrupted.

The return against the rapids is more arduous. The forward boatman stands and takes in his hands a long pole which he sharpens at both ends. He holds an impossible foothold easily and waits until his pole is needed. The stern paddler then selects a certain point and with a terrific thrust sends the corial into the teeth of the current. The place he selects is generally close inshore in the shadow of the high dark wall of jungle that borders either bank. It is a relief from the vicious glare of the straight sun in midstream. Talk stops now and the only sound is the hurried whispering of the torrent and the quick slap of water against the sides. The jungle sleeps in its daytime silence.

The man who paddles in the stern never loses an inch. By constantly changing the angle of the canoe against the current he actually makes the adverse stream help him forward. When the channel is shallow the man with the pole swings it down and, as he turns it like the spoke of a mighty wheel, he forces forward. Once an unexpected path of current caught our bow and flung it with terrific force toward a jagged rock. But the man with the pole welcomed an opportunity. He lifted one naked foot out of the corial, put it against the rock, and with a stride sent us forward out of danger. Then he resumed his stand in the rolling craft. Again, the man behind us sent us under an overhanging limb, ran forward in the canoe till he caught the branch with his hands, then bent backwards till he had walked to his place again and the corial had been sent ten feet ahead. At last the rapid is left behind and conversation is resumed.

No one else can do this. The Bushnegroes are the only people in the world

who can, for this reason, open the way to the vast wealth the jungle conceals. If they desired they could become, in spite of cheating purchasers down the river, enormously rich, even as we reckon riches. The huge trees that throng the country they inhabit are nearly every one some exquisite hardwood for which no price is too great. The ground they walk upon is rotten with pure gold, so it is said. But the Bushnegroes' needs are few. Some iron pots—some strips of colored calico—that is all they want. So each Bushnegro family is content once or twice each year to fell some trees, miraculously, considering their total lack of equipment, drag them to the river-bank, and float them down to town. Hardwood of course sinks like a rock, so they build submerged rafts which they buoy up by lashing their corials to the timbers. In this way they come down the rivers and through the rapids. It is an extraordinary skill, but to the Bushnegro it is commonplace. It is another detail of life. Here again they have mastered a necessity for survival.

II

Existence in the jungle is more discouraging than anything the white race has ever had to confront and master. There are two ways you may eat. You may hunt for your food or you can make the earth yield for you. But if a village depends upon game for its subsistence, that village must perpetually go deeper and deeper into the jungles. It can never pause or find time for rest. Game is never common. When it has been hunted for a little while the beasts that remain go always farther and farther away. They lead a chase that since the birth of time has dulled brains and broken backs and destroyed whole peoples from very weariness. So the Bushnegroes hunt very little. They prefer to work the soil.

But the enmity of the jungle to any life but its own is unrelenting. Clearing a single acre is a work that occupies a whole town for many weeks. The trees—many of them two hundred feet in height and so great around that three men with their arms outstretched can scarcely encompass them—must be cut down and dragged away. Then the matted tangle of vines and undergrowth must be weeded out and at last the thick carpet of rotted vegetation has to be scraped away. When the Bushnegroes have done this they know they can plant and reap only a single crop. The next year they must make another field and plant again. The parasol ants see to it this is so.

Parasol ants are one of the forest's surest weapons against the encroachment of humankind. They are the only successful agriculturists in the jungle. Many times while scrambling through the bush I have come upon hillocks as large as a room. Very soon I learned that the longest way round is the shortest way home. In these mounds the parasol ants conduct their swarming agrarianism. They resent trespassers. Still more frequently you see that the path you are following is crossed by two lines of ants. One column is unladen. The one which parallels it, going in the opposite direction, carries bits of green leaf as big as dimes. They are returning to the mound where they will deliver their burdens over to another group of workers who roll each leaf segment into saliva-covered pellets which they bury on endless underground terraces. As the leaves rot they provide a fertilizer which induces the growth of a special type of fungus. This fungus is the only food the parasol ants eat. It is said that their organization is so exact that a new crop of the fungus, which requires forty-eight hours to ripen, is available every hour. The demand for leaves is insatiable and, unfortunately for men, the plant they seem to prefer is the cassava, a type of tuber which is the chief food reliance of the Bushnegroes.

But the parasol ants have one peculiarity. They will not disturb a cassava crop the first year it is planted on any

given clearing. You may harvest safely, but do not attempt a second crop. The ants will wait until it is nearly ripe and then one night they will come and with their scissorlike horns cut every trace of leaf away and, with their prizes held umbrella-wise overhead, return to their mound.

The Bushnegroes make no attempt to combat the parasol ants. White planters have told me the creatures seem to thrive on arsenic—that there is nothing which one may effectually do against them. But the whites waste time in trying. The Bushnegroes do not, because since their race began they have recognized the essential fact of the impossibility of any lasting conquest of the forest. It is part of their ingrained philosophy to accept with perfect equanimity every discouragement and defeat—to make provision for the certainty of defeat and to keep on, cling to the day's content, and waste no sun-filled hour in bitterness. They know that man's struggle for conquest of the jungle is vain and will always be vain. Because they can laugh and ignore, they still survive where others have failed and gone away and died.

Though the forest seems a chaos of triumphant life, one thing is curiously lacking. There is no food for man. It lends evidence to the curious, half-mystic sense of the conscious enmity of the jungle that comes at once to dwell forever in the minds of those who venture there. There are berries and roots, of course, but nearly all contain a poison. There is a nut the monkeys eat but it will kill a man. Even the cassava root must first be drained of its juice or it will kill a man within an hour.

Necessarily, the diet of the Bushnegroes is limited. Cassava, which they squeeze dry and bake into cakes, comprises fully ninety per cent of each individual's sustenance from birth to death. Greasy river-fish caught in basket nets, an occasional deer or bush-hog, and rice bought in the settlements completes the menu. It is a dreary enough fare, but no forest people has yet suffered from the curse of epicureanism. The Bushnegro has not only learned not to be unavailingly particular about food, but he has learned through many generations not to be unduly disturbed if he cannot eat at all for a time. It is not unusual when you take a Bushnegro on a short expedition with you to have him forget to bring any food for himself. It won't trouble him. A banana or two will suffice for a few days. But when he returns to his village again the deficit is promptly made up. He will eat until his body literally stretches and then sleep it off; and the next day he is prepared for a duplicate irregularity. The convenience of this knack is evident. Men who require three meals per day at stated intervals had best not travel far. They will not live.

The Bushnegroes have a like talent in respect to sleep. They can go for several days without closing their eyes if at the end of that time there is an opportunity to sleep the clockless day through. These are not simply physical aptitudes. They are part of the inherent genius for content that is native to the forest negro.

The Bushnegroes are not what captains of industry call a "civilized" people. But if a way of life may be judged by the share of happiness which it brings, by the skill which it has developed in devising ways of survival, by the culture and philosophy which it has brought to being to meet with flawless perfection every aspect and accident of life, then the Bushnegroes are the equals of any race that lives. They would be ill at ease, no doubt, if suddenly set down on Manhattan Island. If we were placed as suddenly in the jungles where they live we should die. It is an accidental difference of geography. There is not a particle of superiority on either side. We have finer things. They have splendid dreams.

III

A Bushnegro family, complicated though its organization is, with its many

mothers, each of different family from all the rest and each wife quite unrelated to her husband, is one of the most agreeable social units you will come upon in a lifetime.

Children in these polygamous households are not especially numerous. The Bushnegroes have no imperialistic or moral preference for swarming towns. Life is too difficult and, as one Bushnegro reminded me, children are far too great a nuisance to be produced in exaggerated quantities.

Technically, each mother is supreme arbiter over the lives of her own children. They belong to her family and are unrelated to the father. But actually the father is very interested. It is not an uncommon sight to come upon a Bushnegro man seated on a low stool before his wattle house crooning a quiet chant to a restive little brown baby in his arms. When the boys are old enough to get about by themselves—a state they achieve immeasurably sooner than white children do—their fathers assume a share of their education. Although the Bushnegro women are as expert with a canoe as men, they have so many household duties that this important training ordinarily falls to the male parent. The Bushnegro children are familiarized with every rock and shoal and rapid of the ever-changing river. They know it in all seasons. When they are of age they "seem to know the river by instinct," as the Dutchmen down in the towns always say.

Bushnegro children go totally unclothed until they are seven or eight years old. Then a solitary cotton string is tied about their waists—"to get them used to clothes"—such is the theory. An adult is fully dressed if he wears a bit of bright cloth slightly smaller than a pocket handkerchief, though each man has a more pretentious toga of pied cotton cloth to wear on visits to Paramaribo, the capital. But this is discarded at the first opportunity. Long ages have taught the Bushnegroes that one of the surest ways to commit suicide in the jungle is to wear clothes.

This is not an exaggeration. A young English mercenary soldier who spent five years in Suriname in the latter part of the eighteenth century boasted in the book he subsequently wrote * that he was the only man in his regiment who never suffered a serious illness. Their experience was superlatively trying. The troops had been imported by the Dutch government to help put down one of the slave rebellions that subsequently resulted in the formation of the independent Bushnegro society. Their equipment was inadequate and their search for the elusive rebels took them into the most unhealthy districts of the colony. Nearly all of the soldiers died. But Captain John Stedman, the author, soon observed that the Suriname negroes were never ill and he asked the reason why. Then he adopted as best he could the negro mode of life. He left off nearly all his clothes, he accustomed himself to going barefoot, he bathed four or five times a day in the river, heedless of sharks, and he drank quantities of water without being too particular of its purity. So he lived to tell his tale, a story crammed with admiration and affection for the negroes who were technically his enemies.

Stedman's adopted way of life is in detail the practice of all present-day Bushnegroes. They know that in a tropical climate the body must perspire continually and without interruption. They replace this evaporation by drinking incredible quantities of water. They bathe in the river never less than five times a day. They vigorously clean their teeth several times daily with sand and granulated tobacco. When the sun comes out after rain it promptly dries their naked skin. Clothes, under this circumstance, white travelers learn to their distress, produce a soggy steam bath that is an almost certain guarantee of virulent pneumonia, or, at best, of a severe cold. Even the missionaries who have invaded one Bushnegro village learned by continued disaster to their

* *Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* by Capt. John Gabriel Stedman, London 1796.

little flock that here was no place to insist upon the Nordic morality of calico. . . . Yet you will find few persons in Suriname, or any other tropical country, who are willing to relinquish the stubborn theory that the nakedness of forest peoples is anything but positive proof of a state of pitiable barbarism.

IV

The Bushnegroes' mind and its involved workings seem very curious to the outlander until he discovers that here is a new logic, a conception of life and behavior, which, though it is foreign to anything he has ever encountered, seems curiously adapted to this strange environment.

A white trader fumes with irritation when he remarks that it is impossible to "get down to business" with a Bushnegro. Pressed for details, he admits this isn't literally true but at any rate it takes time. Ask a Bushnegro when he will deliver a raft of hardwoods and he will talk about the rainy season. Talk about the rains and he will speak of the huge snakes that lurk in the streams. I purposely take simple examples. It is the tendency of the Bushnegro's mind to revert to first principles. . . . Of course the hardwoods will be late in arriving down the river—the rains have begun and now the ground is so soft a tree cannot be dragged from the place it is felled. Besides, when the rains come the river rises many, many yards and some of the rapids are impassable for a heavy raft. Talk of the rains, and the Bushnegro remembers that this is the season when the huge anacondas awake from their summer sleep and glide abroad to breed new fears.

Nothing in the jungle has a separate identity. You cannot say "there is a tree," for the thing you point at may have a hundred vines upon it. You cannot say "there is the river." The river is never twice the same. The rocks are the river. So are its fish; your father who drowned there; the corials that float upon it; the destroying floods and the fresh memory of the drought of three years ago when food was scarce and your new-born baby died.

To the Bushnegro every material thing has its spiritual identity. The spirit of a tree need not always stay within the tree. It may wander far abroad. The *animæ* of the forest have their perpetually mutable relationships. "Thinking straight" is a direct product of a materialistic conception. To the animistic Bushnegro the process is synonymous with not thinking at all. He is indirect because the ways of the jungle are not direct.

But even the most irritated trader is apt to admit a certain admiration for the Bushnegroes. All of them are scrupulously honest and usually fair to the point of obstinacy. When the Bushnegro has something to sell he considers his price carefully and names it. If it *is* a fair price and he knows it is, you can take it or leave it. If you start to quibble he will turn his back upon you and walk majestically away. On several occasions I have been made to feel most thoroughly humbled and embarrassed by just such an unspoken criticism of my character. The Bushnegro is not angry. He is rather hurt and his opinion of you has lowered perceptibly, that is all. You will never stand quite so well again in his estimation. The Bushnegroes, trained at first in the despicable experience of slavery, long ago learned that the white men with whom they had contact were more than ready literally to cheat them to death. They have survived by the method of being more honest than the "superior" race of outlanders. If they had been foolish enough to accept economic subjugation the last Bushnegro would have died a century ago.

They have avoided this enemy of commercialism by stringently limiting their wants. They love color with the devotion of children and artists. But their jungles are colorful with butterflies and passion flowers, so a very little calico will do. Though they are in constant

contact with foreign civilization through the periodic trips down-river to Paramaribo with their hardwood rafts, the Bushnegroes have not copied a single bauble of the town. Their history from the beginning has been a story of passionate attachment to the idea of an absolutely independent physical and intellectual integrity of race. A pair of shoes or a top hat therefore will never be taken too seriously.

Pretty bright-colored seeds make excellent necklaces. Shells that gleam in the sunlight lie along the shores of their own faraway streams. A brown back is charming to Bushnegro eyes if it is tattooed in circlets and lines cut with a knife and filled in with wood ashes so the welts rise. Rich Bushnegroes carry guns they have bought in Paramaribo. But they are seldom loaded. That would be silly, dangerous, and expensive. When the barrel has been laboriously polished with sand so that it shines, the intention of the gun has been realized.

Once a tall, black Bushnegro passed my hut. It was twilight and the rain was pouring down in a steady, gleaming steam. The man held an enormous leaf in front of him so that it bent gracefully above his head and kept the rain away. Across his back was flung a drapery of scarlet, green, and blue cloth. From one shoulder hung his gun, its wet barrel glistening. The heavy cutlass in his free hand shone like silver. He walked with a long lifting stride, his head back, his body erect. The muscles of his slender naked legs and his powerful back rippled in the rain and pallid twilight like a black pond in moonlight. He was supremely happy.

This above all else is the open secret of the Bushnegroes' successful continuance in a land that has permitted no other invaders. They have known from the beginning that the things one has are good; the things one may not have are worthless. In the jungle their philosophy has taught them content. In a forest of fear they know fear must be forgotten if you would live. When the red sun falls down behind the trees; when the breeze of night whispers in the leaves; when the tigers roar far away, the Bushnegro crawls within his hut and his body sleeps, while his spirit still wanders, adventures, and laughs.

LA FAYETTE AND THE DRAGON

BY PHILIP GUEDALLA

"Beau chevalier qui partez pour la guerre,
Qu'allez-vous faire
Si loin d'ici?"
Chanson De Barberine.

IT IS the essence of chivalry to interfere. The annals of common men are filled with self-regarding entries; minding, with nervous concentration, their own business, they live their own lives, do their own work, and die in due course their own deaths. But no such unheroic limits are set to the activities of their splendid betters. A fever of altruism propels them into their neighbors' affairs; a passionate unselfishness dictates a lifelong orgy of interference. When they ride out, no dragon engaged in its legitimate avocations is secure from their intrusion, no maiden is permitted to enjoy for long the exquisite agonies of her distress; and drowning men, up for the second time, are exposed to sudden, and frequently distasteful rescues. Born far beyond the age of armor and persisting, by a still stranger achievement, into the age of Louis Philippe, Marquis de La Fayette was all his life an indefatigable member of that busy company. Orphans evoke their highest instincts; stray victims of oppression exasperate them into disinterested, but violent, action; they plunge into protracted adventures on behalf of total strangers tied to trees; and one may be sure, if ever they consent to die for a cause, that it is someone else's. This mood of high endeavor is fed by a continual inquiry into other people's business; and it may be that those flame-pictures of the Hero and Prophet, Priest, and Man of Letters once brushed by a fuliginous lecturer in Albemarle Street, should be supplemented by a portrait, only slightly less engaging, of the Hero as Paul Pry.

This simple craving may, perhaps, account for the unduly high proportion of heroic types produced by Anglo-Saxon races. For they are, as foreign observers almost uniformly attest, incurably inquisitive; and having once inquired into what does not concern them, they have been rarely known to leave it without setting it right. Intrusiveness is the spring of noble actions; and a temper of wholly unwarrantable interference has often earned a statue. Such is, in almost all recorded cases, the mood of chivalry; and it is gratifying to reflect that (in spite of the Latin, almost Gallic derivation of the term) the mood is peculiarly Anglo-Saxon. It is not, one feels, for nothing that the English have selected St. George for adoration: that unprovoked assault on someone else's dragon was irresistible. For what other race has elevated intervention into a foreign policy and raised meddling into a public virtue? Touched with the District Visitor's pleasant consciousness of the deep depravity of other people, they regard the world of foreigners; and a brutal Tsar, misgovernment in Naples, atrocities performed upon Bulgarians or Armenians stir a deep response. A strange type of Englishmen is even extant which collects foreign grievances as other men collect butterflies. It thrills at the first news of outrage abroad, leaves England in a hurry, and becomes the adopted hero of some foreign land, which honors (but

frequently misspells) its benefactor's name. Marquis de La Fayette was surely a cousin of that heroic family. Extreme instances of this splendid impulse are Lord Byron, who fought a war upon it, and those accomplished brothers Buxton who, designed by birth to play a leading part in the politics of East Anglia, extended their activity steadily eastwards until it included the entire Balkan Peninsula; whilst Palmerston, who built an active policy upon the same emotion, and Mr. Gladstone, who—more judicious—wrote a pamphlet, are milder cases. A flattering hallucination frequently persuades the benevolent intruders that their devotion is to their victims, that the attraction in the adventure is rather in the maiden than the dragon. But this delusion rarely extends to the embarrassed nations which they befriend. For these kindly foreigners name a street after them with simple courtesy and leave them in total oblivion punctuated by centenaries. But their saviors glow with an undying consciousness of virtue achieved, of services successfully obtruded, of one more, yet one more deed of chivalry.

The mood, one feels, is British. Yet once at least it seems to stand most clearly in a foreign instance; and, by a pleasing irony, the heroic foreigner intruded upon a British quarrel. When St. George was French, damsel and dragon were both English. His country had, indeed, a high tradition of chivalry. But Bayard seemed a trifle Gothic; crusading attitudes were most inelegant; and after polite conversation had replaced the tournament, romance was singularly dead in France. It had sought refuge, years before, a little farther to the south, where the carved Spanish hills had once watched chivalry ride out on Rosinante in search of sheep, of windmills, of Maritornes, of the incomparable Dulcinea. So, when an unromantic government frowned upon young gentlemen eager to go campaigning overseas, they wore disguises, made signs to the inn-keeper's daughter at St. Jean de Luz, and posted off to Spain. Somewhere beyond the sunset there was a war; a brutal tyrant oppressed a virtuous and simple-minded peasantry; and how could a high-spirited young gentleman in the *Mousquetaires Noirs* do less than fly to the rescue? Elderly ministers might spin tenuous webs of neutrality at Versailles. But where the Spanish hills watch the still waters of Pasajes Bay and tall masts look in at little windows, a sailing-ship of two guns was fitting out in the spring days of 1777; until one morning it moved slowly across the bay, glided between the headlands, dipped to the first Biscayan swell, and left that deep fold of the Spanish hills, with papers (exquisitely misleading) for the Islands and Marquis de La Fayette on his first crusade.

II

It is the way of romantic young men to be transparent; and the impulsive nobleman was like glass. The Marquis was nineteen; and his motives were luxuriously exposed in an ecstasy of explanatory letters to his wife (he had a wife of seventeen), to his wife's father, to the unsympathetic intelligence of M. de Vergennes. Viewed in a colder light they have a little of that perfect clarity which, poorly armed and oddly mounted, once clattered through the long shadows of a still summer morning in La Mancha. So the tumbled skyline of the Spanish hills faded into the east behind him; and, rolling horribly, the *Victoire* crossed the Bay. He felt extremely ill, and thought hard of his mission. It was the purest, most untarnishable knight-errantry. Knowing little of the cause, he deeply savored the adventure. The maid, the lonely tree, the dragon, the single combat danced in his mind; and as they plowed the *triste plaine* of the North Atlantic, he vowed himself deliciously to the services of his unknown lady, captive beyond the gray seas. No student of politics, he had heard of the

Americans for the first time a few months before. They had declared, it seemed, their independence. Had he not heard an English duke say something to that effect at a dinner table in the previous summer? It seemed a noble action; and before dinner was over, he had resolved to be their champion. The cause was modish; that season even card-tables proclaimed the superiority of *le boston* to *le whist*. A word (through an interpreter) with Mr. Deane confirmed him; and, indifferent to the finer shades of colonial taxation but scenting an indisputable adventure, he sailed. If his companions were a trifle mixed, his hopes were high. The sky was bright, he was nineteen, and his crest had recently received the brave addition of a new Latin motto, which challenged grammar and enemies alike with the fierce inquiry *Cur non?* But his reasons were not wholly selfish. Was it not (as he explains to his father-in-law) *une occasion unique de me distinguer et d'apprendre mon métier?* For the young gentleman was a soldier; and eager soldiers often seized such opportunities of active service, before the happy device of autumn maneuvers obviated the professional necessity of foreign enlistment.

Yet the motives which urged him westwards into the American service were inalienably French. He wrote eloquently of his *amour pour la gloire et pour la liberté* in an inverted order, of which none of his new friends would have been capable, even if they had admitted *la gloire* to their more austere philosophy. Once, indeed, writing from Valley Forge in the hard winter of '78, he made a more significant admission: *l'abaissement de l'Angleterre, l'avantage de ma patrie, le bonheur de l'humanité qui est intéressée à ce qu'il y ait dans le monde un peuple entièrement libre, tout m'engageait à ne pas quitter* . . . So the human race was a good third among his motives. The winning places were held by French patriotism and the defeat of England; and America ran last. In the same temper—*persuadé bonnement que nuire à l'Angleterre c'est servir* (*oserai-je dire c'est venger?*) *ma patrie*—he wrote a long dispatch to Versailles, in which he studied the surest way to ruin England outside the American theater of war. *Mon amour pour ma patrie me fait considérer avec plaisir sous combien de points du vue les chagrins de famille de l'Angleterre peuvent lui être avantageux.* . . . That was not quite the tone of a single-minded friend of the United States, or even of the human race. But it was sound French policy, and in a delighted plan for raids on the British factories in the East he seemed almost to forget the struggling colonists. The distant prospect was bright with disloyal sepoys, jealous nabobs, angry Mahrattas, and sunken East Indiamen; and, with encouragement, Marquis de La Fayette might have revived the forgotten part of Dupleix. French policy, indeed, which sought its friends impartially among the enemies of England, followed the lead; and after Washington almost the next ally, with a pleasing variety of color and principles, was Hyder Ali. But it was strange that these sordid calculations should divert Marquis de La Fayette from his crusade, that he should sully the bright dawn of freedom with worldly thoughts of intrigue among ancient races far to the east; perhaps he wished, like an inverted Canning, to call an old World into being to redress the balance of the New.

Yet he crusaded on indomitably. The best traditions of knight-errantry were respected by his profound ignorance of the persons whom he was to rescue. Landing in Carolina, he was impressed by the complete equality of rich and poor prevailing in the United States; and, charmed by southern courtesy, he found it grow perceptibly more southern, as he traveled farther north. The comments of visitors upon those hospitable States are almost uniformly inane. But Marquis de La Fayette had come to rescue, not to write the usual book. The maiden was still in chains; the eager knight was at the foot of the tree; and

he went off to find the dragon. It was, to be frank, a rather sleepy dragon that the young gentleman and his friends pursued from the Hudson to Yorktown; although once at least he did his best to rouse it to a sense of the position by a challenge to single combat. The bold cartel, delivered to one of his Majesty's commissioners to Congress, evoked the dry response that these national differences could be more conveniently adjusted by the British navy. Balked of the field of honor, the young Marquis withdrew to his place in the American ranks; but his detestation of *messieurs les Anglais* burned, one feels, with a brighter flame after this gruff denial of the role of David gloriously matched against a Hanoverian Goliath. But his place in the hunt was always prominent.

Arriving, aged nineteen, with a vague promise of the rank of Major-General, he found the surprising promise honored by Congress. Such promotion (for the boy was a captain of cavalry in the French service) was a trifle sudden. But it was due in part to the fact that, singular among the knights-errant whose hearts beat for the American cause, he asked no pay; and, rarer still in the stream of distinguished foreigners which set towards Philadelphia, he was really distinguished. It was sound policy in Congress to hoist the young nephew of M. de Noailles, cousin of the Prince de Poix, and son-in-law of the Duc d'Ayen, as a bright standard of French sympathy. So he was given rank and rode on General Washington's staff, an exquisite embarrassment to those French diplomats who were still explaining to Great Britain the strict neutrality of France. A little gallantry and a wound bravely borne at the Brandywine earned him a command; and he was soon maneuvering colonial riflemen before Gloucester. At twenty he was promoted general of division; and before the year was out he was of sufficient importance in the army to be moved as a pawn—perhaps a knight—in the jealous game, which a few supple gentlemen in New York were playing against General Washington. But knights are simple-minded; and knightly as ever, Marquis de La Fayette was loyal to his chief, and spoiled the game. He was a bright, engaging figure, in his white French sash and an American general's uniform, which combined delightfully the charms of chivalry with those of an infant prodigy. Whilst a ragged, freezing army cheered "the soldiers' friend," even the British, with their slower perceptions, were becoming gradually aware of "the Boy"; and after the French alliance had almost legitimized his odd position, he acquired a still higher value as a living symbol of the treaty and, almost, as an ambassador of France.

III

There was a glorious interlude of leave in France, a twelvemonth's carnival of universal kisses, of respectful ministers, of royal pardon, and sudden promotions. Even the Queen was gracious, and begged a regiment of Dragoons for him. He breathed a feverish devotion to his country—*je l'adore, cette patrie.* Once more his guiding motive was visible through the purer flame of his constancy to America: *l'idée de voir l'Angleterre humiliée, écrasée, me fait tressaillir de joie.* In this agreeable mood he spent a few weeks on the coast, attached to a force which waited, waited with hopeful eyes fixed on the English Channel. Armies had waited so before, and would wait again. But the Narrow Seas were unresponsive; and the bold invaders never sailed. In this brave endeavor Marquis de La Fayette was posted farther to the west, near Rochefort. He lived in a high fever of expectation of some *grand coup, qu'il soit longtemps, fera tomber cette grandeur soufflée, cette puissance fantastique.* His task, to be precise, was to emancipate Ireland with his new regiment of Dragoons and a few details of infantry. He had explored the subject, formed (delightful and mysterious process) *quelques rela-*

tions secrètes; and the young liberator found the unhappy island *très fatiguée de la tyrannie anglaise.* It was now, as Washington was promptly informed in an eager letter, *le projet de mon coeur . . . de la rendre libre et indépendante comme l'Amérique.*

So a new maiden, chained to another tree, gleamed vaguely through the wood; but it was still the same incorrigible dragon. Yet he was not inconstant. Late in the year he christened an infant son *George-Washington,* and sailed for Boston in a cruiser with news of six thousand French troops and a loan. "The Boy" resumed his command, lived through the breathless afternoon at Mrs. Arnold's, and served upon the court-martial which sentenced Major André. Followed a winter interlude of tea and harpsichords at Philadelphia. A lady sang, another played, and there was even dancing. But these timid gayeties ended when the British swept disobligingly into the south; and Marquis de La Fayette was detached to deal with them. He fenced skillfully with Cornwallis, and followed close, as he stumbled heavily towards Yorktown. Later, when the event was known, he wrote with the retrospective foresight common to autobiographers that he had always meant *de repousser lord Cornwallis du côté de la mer, et de l'enlacer dans les rivières de manière à ce qu'il ne pût avoir de retraite.* That was not quite, perhaps, the tone of his letters during the campaign. But strategic insight, rare at any age, is almost unknown at twenty-three. It is enough that he played an active part, tired out his enemy, watched him go to ground by the York River, and charged happily against his crumbling redoubts in the last assault. So he could write, a little shrilly, to Versailles after the unforgettable surrender: *La pièce est jouée, Monsieur le comte, et le cinquième acte vient de finir.* For the sleepy dragon was led captive; the maiden stepped lightly from her tree; and the happy knight sailed back to Europe, dizzy with acclamations.

He still, it seemed, had a vague wish to prolong the adventure. It took the rather schoolboy form of a craving to appear before King George in American uniform; and his efforts to obtain a mission for this spectacular purpose evoked from a sullen English diplomat an acrid comment on "that vain and insolent young man." His countrymen, in that confusion of thought with which allies sometimes emerge from wars, believed that they had won it; and the young gentleman was widely celebrated in France as "the conqueror of Cornwallis," "the savior of America with"—generous addition—"Washington." In the last phase he waited vainly at Cadiz to sail with an expedition to the Islands. But the quest was over; and once more he roamed the forest, fancy-free.

Inclined at first to vow himself to the service of another, darker maiden, he plagued American statesmen with strange suggestions about negro slaves. They stood indubitably in need of a rescuer; and Mr. Madison listened politely to his odd confidences upon the topic of abolition, whilst Mr. Adams received a violent denunciation of the crime of slave-owning, "a crime much blacker than any African face." He even made a shy avowal of his views—"*mon rêve favori* (hobby-horse)"—to Washington, announcing that he proposed to purchase a plantation in Cayenne for the sole purpose of emancipation. In his reply the wise Virginian alluded with grave courtesy to this fresh proof of his young friend's noble qualities; he prayed devoutly that his countrymen might one day share the same opinions, but indicated that the possibility was somewhat remote, convinced that a sudden emancipation would have grave consequences, though something gradual might and should be done. The Marquis persevered. But a paler figure shared with the dusky queen his chivalrous affections. For somehow he had become aware that Protestants in France were subject to gross injustices. By some anomaly surviving from the age of per-

secution, they could not contract legal marriage or even leave valid wills. He burned at this harsh denial of testamentary and matrimonial delights, petitioned ministers, and traveled in the Cevennes in search of Huguenot grievances. Washington was informed beyond the seas of the new adventure and thrilled with his correspondent's detestation of yet another *intolérable despotisme*. But all the while his ears were strained to catch fresh cries for help. The world, in 1786, was exquisitely full of wrongs to right. M. Necker had a new arithmetic; M. de Condorcet had a new penal code; there was even a whole *Encyclopédie* full of new orders on every topic. Yet he had his disappointments. For sometimes a maiden left off calling just as he had got his lance in rest and spurred at the dragon. Ireland, a promising victim, ceased to need assistance—*tout est apaisé en Irlande, et, de ce côté, il n'y a rien à faire pour la liberté*. Even Holland, which had looked a hopeful case of injustice, seemed to fail him: *Je me flattais que la Hollande offrirait quelque espérance de ce genre; mais je crains que non*. It is the cry of Quixote. So he roamed the forest, listening hard. But suddenly, quite close to his elbow, he caught a new, a deeper voice. It rose and fell, hung in the air, and rose again; and slaves, Americans, Irish, Dutchmen, and Protestants were all forgotten in his last adventure. For the voice was France.

IV

It thrilled him, when he sat in the Notables, to air his plain American manners and to call bluntly for the States General—*et même mieux que cela*. For France should have a Congress, like his splendid States. It was glorious to scare the Duc d'Harcourt's salon by the calm announcement, *Je crois qu'il ferait bien de commencer l'histoire à l'année 1787*. He was twenty-nine that year; and the world had a strange air of springtime. The forest was full of voices, and he rode firmly to the rescue. They called a little timidly at first, in local assemblies, in the long ratiocinations of provincial *cahiers*, in the guarded eloquence of the Constituent. But soon the cry dropped to a deeper note, as the sage gentlemen paced the trim alleys of Versailles between debates and caught upon the wind the big voice of Paris. It swelled and came nearer; and as the smoke drifted across the Bastille, it filled the air, and there were shots in it and cries. A sudden turn lifted Marquis de La Fayette into power. The free nation formed a National Guard and put him in command. Knight-errantry has rarely ended in a stranger place. He had ridden out as usual, answered the call, and charged with his accustomed fire. The dragon was duly prostrate. But where was the tree, the waiting damsel in distress? Somehow the familiar charm was not working quite correctly. For this time he had rescued a very large maiden from a very small dragon; and she appeared to insist, in breach of all the rules of chivalry, on completing the rescue for herself. Indeed, in the later stages it was not altogether clear which was the maiden and which the dragon. For he found himself assuring a scared monarch that he was *naturellement républicain, mais mes principes eux-mêmes me rendent à présent royaliste*. And soon the dragon abruptly changed places with the maiden, when he came to an open window in the raw cold of an autumn morning at Versailles and knelt to a royal lady in face of a roaring square. This graceful act abundantly fulfilled the exigencies of chivalry. But how far, how strangely the knight had departed from the first objects of his adventure! For it was a distinctly novel experience to rescue a grateful dragon from a bloodthirsty maiden. So he played on his queer, inverted *rôle;* and the name, which had stood for insurrection, became a synonym for bayonets. He could see it plainly now: the French were not Americans after all, and one more historical analogy had failed to work.

Once he retired helpless. He was the Lamartine of '89, without the excuse of being a poet. But they sent him to command an army on the frontier, resolved to confront the enemies of the Revolution with *la constitution et La Fayette.* This specific against invasion was strangely compounded; since the General, no longer a Marquis, fumbled dispiritedly among the northern fortresses, and behind him on the sky he watched the glare of Paris. The place scared him —*lui faisait horreur*—as it throbbed and glowed through the hot summer weeks of 1792; and as his infantry waited, a little hysterically, for the Austrians, he watched over his shoulder. He was still watching, when the streets swept roaring through the Tuileries, splintered a door or so, and saw the Queen put a red cap on her son's head. This ill-mannered anarchy was surely intolerable; and with a sudden impulse he drove south down the white dusty roads, saw once again the glaring city, and faced the cold stare of the Assembly. For those exacting men, whose civic virtues grew daily brighter, disliked the impulses of soldiers. With a movement of chivalry he paid a visit to the lonely Court. But they bowed politely; and, lonelier still, he returned to his army on the frontier. One last adventure seemed to beckon. Might they not bring the King to Compiègne, surround him with loyal troops, and give law to France? That last ride—with a smiling Queen, two happy children and a grateful sovereign—would be worthy of any knight. But it never came. So he trailed dismally from camp to camp along that frontier, where the very names—Longwy, Maubeuge, Sedan—were heavy with disaster. *La pièce,* as he had once written from Yorktown, *etait jouee.* If any man remained, there was no part for him. Like *Chantecler* he had called the dawn; but when he called again no sun obeyed him and the sky was unchanged. It was red now over Paris; and in the north, suspected and uncertain, La Fayette was in the saddle with his staff. At last he turned his horse's head towards the frontier and rode, despairing, out of history.

A generation later he made an almost posthumous return. The old man (he was seventy-three) became an emblem of insurrection against Charles X. For he was the past, the free tri-colored past of '89; he exhaled an authentic air of the Rights of Man, the sovereign people, and the *Marseillaise.* So he was swept again down the roaring streets and left, a little shaky, at the Hôtel de Ville. Once more the lance, once more the dragon and the waiting maiden. But this time she was far more manageable; and as the monster withdrew in pardonable surprise to England, she let herself be rescued nicely and stood waiting the liberalism of King Louis Philippe, with grateful eyes and neatly banded hair. The state was saved again; and there was to be—his last historical analogy—an American constitution, where an hereditary Washington should preside eternally over a happy nation. So, for the last time, the knight dismounted, lifted his visor, took a demure salute, and hung up his armor.

The Lion's Mouth

A BAS LA LIBERTÉ

BY BURGES JOHNSON

COLUMBUS was a commonplace sort of fellow, so they say, with one idea. Plenty of people have ideas and never get anywhere with them. But folks jeered at him and disagreed with him and got in his way, and so trained and developed the muscles of his will that he was able to carry his idea triumphantly down the field and across the goal line.

Martin Luther seems to have been no one out of the ordinary, with a full supply of human frailties. But men tried to stop him and suppress him, and the more powerful the opposition the bigger he got to be.

The pages of history are sprinkled with the names of men whose convictions fed upon opposition; and it is the contemplation of that fact which is making me dispirited. I feel that the cause of truth is suffering from too much freedom.

Take my own case for example. A teacher, more than anyone else, should have powerful convictions. I have plenty of theories and numberless views and a few solid beliefs. But I live in too gentlemanly a world for one of my temperament. People who disagree with my views just courteously disagree and then let me alone. If only someone would try to stop me I might become a force for truth. Martyrs are as necessary now as ever they were. Yet here comes a powerful organization of university professors which tries in the name of "academic freedom" to do away with martyrization. With well-intentioned earnestness it builds up protections which actually do so protect our venturesome spirits that we soon come to float at ease in a placid harbor. Columbus with the backing of a Research Foundation and a cohort of sympathizers, all socially well established, crying "sail wherever you like," would have talked himself out in some tap room along shore.

What my teacher-spirit needs in order to make a Columbus or a Luther of it is a few old-fashioned college trustees of the sort one reads about. In moments of reviving animation my fancy can still create one. I see him with domineering manner, little beady eyes, and a heavy jowl. He slips into my classroom one day with a hard smile of greeting and listens from a rear seat uncompromisingly. Suddenly he interrupts. "Am I to understand," he barks, "that you are opposed to the Palmer system of penmanship?" I rise to meet the situation and, with one hand thrust between the first and second buttons of my coat, the other resting gracefully on my desk, I answer him in clear tones, "You are. I am."

"Then turn out the lights," he says. "The class is dismissed."

With only one experience like that to rouse me, I could fight against any sort of penmanship, vertical, Spencerian, or backhand; with two or three such trustees dogging my footsteps, I could be a Peter the Hermit.

Circumstances have always been against me in just this way. More than

a quarter of a century ago, when I was a youth in college, some accident set my brain to functioning. Its processes were far from perfect, but still the wheels went around and something ticked with reasonable regularity. I turned my youthful scrutinizing gaze upon the subject of a personal religion and at once proceeded to dismiss a large number of conventional beliefs. When the time for "senior statistics" came along I wrote myself down a Scientific Monist and then awaited the tragedy of a broken home. Nothing happened. "He has not received the pamphlet I sent him," I thought to myself. So I took another copy home with me on a short vacation, feeling that the break must come sooner or later, and it might as well be now. My clergyman father was then preaching from an historic trinitarian pulpit in New England. I faced him in his little study and, while there was love and respect in my feeling toward him, yet I knew that truth must come first. "I am a Scientific Monist," I said firmly.

"So I had observed," he answered me in serious tones. "I had always hoped that we might have one in the family."

What was the use! Monism, scientific or otherwise, lost a crusader in that moment. But I hurried on, resolved that somehow I should reach beneath the surface of that kindly sympathy. "I find it impossible," I whispered, "to recite most of the Apostle's Creed."

"Then you really ought not to," he replied.

"But," I urged, "I have dismissed so many of the things you consider fundamental, that a serious break has surely occurred."

"I am glad to have you begin thinking," he smiled, "and it is just possible that you and I would still agree on some of the fundamentals."

What chance for a Peter the Hermit after that?

A few years ago I gained new heart. That was when the Lusk Laws—or was it Rusk?—were enacted in New York State. Was I not a New York State teacher? I assembled in my own mind a number of things that I was sure would cause Mr. Rusk—or was it Lusk?—to distrust me. I formulated some sentences that exalted the rights of free speech and gibed at silly legislators who would command the tides to cease their ebb and flow. What though some of my incendiary phrases happened to be from the pen of Samuel Adams, yet I girt up my loins with them. But I could not find enough people violently defending the Lusk Laws—or was it Rusk?—and too many were amused by them. One can crusade against a great wrong or a great injustice and find one's own convictions deepening and intensifying as the fight progresses, unless the thing crusaded against happens to be funny. One may tilt at a windmill, but not at a windmill which sticks out a pink tongue at you.

Some years ago at a famous Eastern college for women there was a ban upon any organization of embryo socialists. So a group of students were wont to meet in a graveyard adjacent to the campus and there carry on their discussions. The result was that graduates of that graveyard—Inez Milholland and others—became militant crusaders in the cause of equal suffrage and made the world respect them for the depth of their convictions. But the socialist club that had thriven in the graveyard actually died of inanition a few years later when the ban was removed. How under more liberal conditions are we going to get that same zeal for truth into these youngsters of to-day?

Here and there in the old endowed colleges they maintain a tradition of compulsory chapel. For want of something better, earnest young zealots tilt at that, calling it compulsory religion. Can't we give them real iron to teethe on? Poor young things, born too late, they don't know what compulsory religion is! What they need is a militantly Calvinistic college president planting himself in the doorway of the campus church, flanked on either hand by strong-

arm members of the Christian Association. Students filing meekly past him toward the dim aisles are questioned sharply, "Do you believe in Jonah?"

"No, sir," stammers a frightened youth, but with a chin on him that suggests the stuff martyrs are made of.

"Out with him," says the president. "Silent meditation on bread and water for two weeks."

"Can you sing all the stanzas of hymn 246 without mental reservation?' he says to the next.

"I am a Christian Scientist," the boy answers proudly.

"Tie him up," says the president, "and tickle his feet."

"How about infant damnation?" he says to a third.

"I don't believe in any of it," is the answer. "I am a Parsee, or Fire Worshiper, and I want to spend these meditative moments lighting matches in the Athletic Circle."

"Firing squad at sunrise," snarls the president.

Under some such regime as that there would be a revolt against the traditional, and a revival of real religion on the college campus such as has not been known since early Victorian days, and young fighters would go forth into the world wonderfully equipped for evangelistic work in modernist pulpits.

I have come to envy those people who are able to build up an opponent of straw and then attack him. If their imaginations are keen enough, the straw man in time becomes very real, and they can fight as earnestly as the best. And if they somehow kill themselves in the struggle, I am sure that a kindly Deity, with a sense of humor, will count them true martyrs.

Yes, the world of ideas is getting to be too gentlemanly. Of course, there are plenty of physical battles going on. One could enlist in the Treasury service and fight bootleggers, or smugglers of Chinese; but that would not train the mind into a spiritual force. I could chalk up on the door of a church "To Hell with the Pope"; but no satisfaction comes from being jailed as a common nuisance rather than as a martyr. One cannot gain convictions by membership in the Klan; beliefs curdle into prejudices behind a mask.

I cherish plenty of theories, and a number of views, and a few solid beliefs; but the world needs men with convictions, and I fear I shall never have many of those until someone tries to convict me. Just for the good of my soul I think of moving to Tennessee and denying Santa Claus.

CONDUCT UNBECOMING IN THE PREHISTORIC

BY WINIFRED KIRKLAND

IT IS always a comfort to rush into print with one's worries—if one can only get there. I can't understand why everybody is not as anxious as I over a series of events which tend to become cumulative and which any day may flame up into a Situation. I refer to the present alarming tendency of the prehistoric to erupt all over the earth's surface. Things are getting to such a pass that you can't pick up a newspaper without running into a caveman or a buried prince or a behemoth or a dinosaur. I didn't begin to be really alarmed so long as all these antediluvian reptiles and all this defunct royalty kept decently remote, in Egypt or Crete or in the picture supplements; but when kings and queens in extensive necklaces begin to break out right under foot in Ohio, I am just plain frightened. I can't help feeling that there is Something Back of All This, something subversive, upsetting. I wonder that people don't write to the editor demanding an Investigation.

For myself I can't help thinking that it would be wise to put a stop to all this uplift movement from beneath the soil

before it gets beyond control, for while the movement in some aspects may appear harmless, it has possibilities that are distinctly sinister. Take merely the disturbing effect upon the imagination of a herd of mastodon romping down the subways of Manhattan. Let sleeping mastodons lie, I say; don't yank them up by their jawbones and reconstruct their skeletons to stare us out of sleep.

Sometimes I query whether these curious uprisings of people and animals from bygone history are not intended to distract us from our work of making present-day history. When I read such impassioned statements as "the past sixty years of scientific research into man's antiquity is a mere suggestion of what lies ahead, a line that entices bold spirits to satisfy their craving for more, while the rest of the scientific world looks on in envious suspense," I feel that these words foreshadow a possible boom in all real estate situated three miles below our knowledge. The rush of would-be excavators to dig in might any day outmatch and depopulate Florida. While such a backing down and away from present problems would undoubtedly be risky, there is the alternative opinion that it might be the best thing in the world, since it may be that we're making such a mess of the present that retirement into the past is about the best thing left for us to do. There is another question that keeps swinging to and fro in my anxious mind. From one aspect I feel that it may prove unsanitary to exhume so many buried civilizations, and then again, I feel that we are destroying our own civilization so rapidly that it might be well to have some kind of civilization on hand—even a mummified variety in a museum—just for use in allusion and reference.

All this upward rush of antiquity to our attention began so casually that it had been occurring here and there over the years and over the continents long before the man in the street found himself caught up in the whirl of returning cavemen and near-cavemen and trumpeting mammoths and winged reptiles, intermingled with majestic Egyptians fresh from the curling iron, and with their geometrically constructed retinues, as these profile their way to publicity amid the deadly arrowheads and stone axes and across the overlapping glacial periods. All this complexity of ancient life came upon the modern world very recently. Now and then somebody used to discover a buried city, but never on the front page. It was Tutankamen who inaugurated this brilliant yet questionable procession out of the past into the present. Poor Tut is old stuff now, but in coffins, in retinue, in treasure he set a pace that any previous king, whenever discovered, will have hard work to keep up with. I suppose it was because they felt the probable anticlimax of any deceased potentate who should attempt to supersede Tut that the powers which rule down yonder—powers that I can't help thinking hostile to all modern peace of mind—decided to remove dead royalty from the headlines and to substitute dinosaurs instead.

Dinosaurs have now become the *dernier cri* in all up-to-date excavating. The dinosaurs are the most acutely prehistoric animals we have with us to-day, and for that very reason, the most dangerous. They have showed uncanny deference to the modern prejudice against germs by being served to us in the container, in ovo, that is. One never knows what to expect from an unhatched egg, especially when it's several million years old. Think what might happen to these ancient eggs now that they're exposed to the speed of modern life! They might hatch out any day. And then what? Suppose we had to have a national park to keep dinosaurs from the extinction they've so long enjoyed. Many of us feel that in the matter of preserving native species Uncle Sam already has too many little mouths to feed; but dinosaurs would certainly have a prior claim over reindeer and buffalo, and the grumpiest

taxpayer wouldn't have the heart to turn down a little dinosaur making congressional demand for a public playground. Or suppose, due to his extreme novelty, the dinosaur should become a fashionable pet, and the humble pedestrian on the sidewalks of Fifth Avenue should have to be forever dodging dinosaurs pattering along on leash!

To me the return of the dinosaur is much more formidable than the return of the caveman. Neanderthalian and Pithecanthropus Erectus have proved quite harmless to have about except that they are so exhausting to spell. Besides, the caveman's re-entrance upon the scene was less abrupt than that of the lizard-bird. For years he had been sending his manners on before him, and fiction and the movies had accustomed us to his conduct before melodrama began to stage the gentleman himself. Somehow the caveman, with all his outstanding hair and tusks and bludgeon, seems a rather pathetic figure nowadays. Fancy his butting up all that way from underground to match his methods with those of a Chicago hold-up!

I'm afraid the caveman, poor lad, has a big disappointment coming to him, if he thinks he has anything to teach us. No, it's not the caveman, to whom no one could attribute any underhand intentions, who causes me concern. It's these up-pushing buried reptiles and royalty. No one can tell what evils they may portend for conservative government and democratic institutions. This widespread defiance of the earth's crust by prehistoric forces may be only the advance rumble of an entire social upheaval. Instead of the encouragement now being everywhere given by enthusiastic but unthinking excavators to these fossilized remains and antediluvian beasts and justly deceased pharaohs, I believe in clamping shut with safety fasteners all cracks now appearing in the surface of any continent. It is the only course for security. "Hark, from the tombs, a doleful sound" should cease to be a slogan merely for rural cemeteries. It now has worldwide significance. There's Something Back of All This excavation. For all one knows, this increasing clatter of men and animals supposed to have been long since silenced may be propaganda of Bolshevists wishing to distract our attention from their own subterranean boring in our national morale.

Speaking of cemeteries, one question above all others teases my midnight pillow. Every single graveyard anywhere unearthed by any excavator is always composed of aristocratic bones exclusively. All races, both the Nordic and the common or garden races, seem to have entombed only their higher classes. What did antiquity do with all its plebeian corpses? These do not seem to have left a single footprint on the sands of time. It is possible the reason the masses are so very much alive to-day is that they have never been buried?

STUDIES IN EXASPERATION

BY CHARLES A. BENNETT

AS THIS is to be a serious and subtle piece of psychological analysis I must begin with a definition. By exasperation, then, I mean the comparative or superlative degree of irritation. Irritation touches only the surface of the mind: exasperation involves the secondary and tertiary layers. Thus, if your fountain pen unexpectedly belches a fat globule of ink upon a fair manuscript, you experience irritation; if, however, (a) it does this a second time and (b) you overhaul the instrument, refilling it, and, in the process, smearing your fingers with ink and (c) you go up to the bathroom and wash and (d) you resume your writing only to have the damned

thing regurgitate two blobs of ink at critical places on the page, *if*, I say, these conditions are fulfilled, *then* you suffer an abrasion of the secondary psychic tissue, or exasperation in one of its milder forms. My object in this brief monograph is to distinguish and describe three forms of exasperation. The first two are familiar. The third has not, so far as I know, been studied by psychologists.

The first concerns the behavior of inanimate objects. Of this I have already given an example above. The most general characteristic of the stimulus in these cases is the inertia of the object, or, in popular language, its tendency to fall back into the place from which you wish to remove it: the thread which evades the eye of the needle, the fire log which rolls back, the tie which jams every time in your collar. It is appalling to think that if Newton is right there is no exception among inanimate things to this law. The lower organisms may be included in the same classification. True, instead of inertia we use the terms persistence or obstinacy, but it is the same thing. The only difference between the matutinal circumvolitant fly which returns again and again to its *point d'appui* on your recumbent face and the oculofugient thread is that the fly is, in theory, vulnerable; but, as this distinction concerns the response and not the stimulus, it is here irrelevant.

The second form of exasperation is that induced by the young of the human species of pre-school age, i.e. babies. From my collection I select case I: T. B. Male. Age, One year. T. B. cannot in strictness be said to have acquired the habit of sleeplessness, for according to the available evidence—and there is a lot of it—he was born with this habit. T. B. had a pronounced antipathy to his crib. He would roar when placed in it and keep on roaring. His parents would spend on an average ten hours out of the twenty-four relieving each other every two hours, in nocturnal perambulation, carrying the child in one or another of the three approved positions: right tackle, left tackle, and horizontal recumbent. After the parent had walked backwards and forwards like a caged animal for forty-five minutes, traversed three miles, and sung a complete repertoire of songs, T. B. would present the appearance of a sleeping infant. Parent murmurs, noiselessly as a thought, "Thank God!" Approaches bed and lowers child into crib with infinite care. Hands withdrawn by inches from contact with infant's person. Parent tiptoes to door. One foot is actually across the threshold and his whole body by anticipation in bed when—the infant emits an eldritch screech.

The defining characteristics of the form under consideration are (a) The exasperating object, though conscious, is as unable to understand the nature of an oath as the inanimate thing. (b) It is vulnerable in theory but not in practice. There is, however, on record the famous case of M. N., an Englishman who, traveling in a third-class compartment was, like his fellow passengers, rendered almost hysterical by the incessant crying of a baby. At last he leaned over towards the distracted mother and, smiling strangely, yet indubitably smiling, said, "Madam, if you would let me have the child for a few minutes I think I could stop its crying." The mother eagerly surrendered the infant, whereupon the man opened the window and threw it out. An exceptional case, but it may be remarked that it is the suppression of desires of this sort that produces the lesion of the secondary psychic layer.

At this point we may consider a form intermediate between forms I and II—the well-known *exasperatio telephonica*. This combines the worst features of the others, for in it two animated and supposedly intelligent beings are connected by an inanimate mechanism. The resultant complex may be analyzed as follows:

(1) Balked disposition or inhibited neural set. The telephoner's assumption is that of intelligent communica-

tion: he expects to be heard and answered. Instead of that he finds himself speaking into a void: inside the world circumscribed by the instrument there is utter silence, silence comparable only to that of a country railway station, a foretaste of that paralysis of all activity when, under the operation of the second law of thermodynamics, the earth will have become numb and dumb and glum.

(2) The omnipotence and the inaccessibility of central.

(3) The imperious yet quite-clearly-seen-to-be-futile impulse to deracinate the telephone and hurl it across the room. In this connection one may recall the case of X. Y., an elderly gentleman who, smitten with *dementia telephonica*, discarded his instrument, walked round to the office of the Telephone Co. and smashed a large plate-glass window. He was cured, but also incarcerated.

I come now to the third and most interesting form, which I propose to call *exasperatio hibernica hibernica* for the reason that it occurs only when dealing with the Irish in Ireland. Before offering an ana'ysis I will give two examples. Since these are drawn from my own experience I can, in relating them, abandon the severe dispassionate scientific style which I have so far employed. Case 43. L. B. Male. Resides in Dublin. The various tram lines of Dublin converge upon Nelson's I illar as a common *terminus ad quem* and diverge from it as a common *terminus a quo*. It would need a poet to convey any adequate idea of the turbulent chaos there at the rush hours. When a tram arrives the customary procedure has been for the waiting horde to make a concerted rush at it, to battle with and trample down the outclimbing passengers, and then to mount on the human debris to their goal. A few minutes later one third of the victors discover that they have boarded the wrong tram; they struggle out, only to meet a wave of new invaders, the original battle is renewed on a smaller scale—and in the middle of it the tram starts. Recently the Dublin police have been trying to introduce some order into this chaos by instituting a system of queues. L. B., then, is waiting for a tram, a member of what is trying to be a queue. A loutish youth barges into the line ahead of him. L. B. remonstrates. "Here," he says, "what about taking your place in the queue?" The loutish youth looks over his shoulder and remarks with withering scorn, "You and your queues!"

The second example involves the telephone again. There are telephones in Ireland. The reason for this is obscure, for they are less like modern inventions than like relics of organs atrophied by disuse. Thus four years ago when I was in Ireland we never dreamed of using our telephone unless we wanted to annoy the local operator. The undertaking was too great. About an hour before you tried to put your call through it was necessary to send a messenger up to the village a mile or so away to ask central —a flighty girl of sixteen—if she would please step in off the street where she was colloguing with friends in order to attend to her instrument, or if she would have finished her tea by five o'clock, the hour when you proposed to ring up. However, this summer I was assured that things had greatly improved and that the system was working well. So one morning I clenched an arm of the instrument firmly in my left hand, cranked the bell vigorously with my right, and shouted "Blackrock 37" until finally I crashed through to central. I know I got through, because after a few minutes I heard a cheerful feminine voice say "Righto!" Then silence, not even a hum or a quiver or a click. How long it lasted I do not know: there was time for my whole past life to rise before me. I shook myself free from my torpor and repeated the number loudly several times. Then silence again—the silence of the void before the universe was created or time was. Abruptly a voice was born at the other end —this time a gruff male voice. (The

poor girl, I suppose, had been swept into eternity.) "Were you calling?" asked the voice. Was I calling! Well, I liked his infernal cheek! That was in substance what I meant, but it took me about two minutes of concentrated vituperation to say it. He heard me through to the end, and then what do you suppose he said? "Be easy now. There's others have to be served as well as yourself."

These two examples may serve to indicate the peculiar quality of *exasperatio hibernica hibernica*. The Irishman exasperates you, and you know your exasperation is justified and even righteous, yet he manages to put you in the wrong. The Irishman in Ireland is ignorant, inefficient, and without any feeling for form or discipline. Queues forsooth! *He* never heard of a queue, therefore who ever heard of a queue? Ah, go 'long with you, you and your high-falutin ideas! Under this assault you begin to weaken. Perhaps queues *are* mere artifices of a pampered civilization and the belief in them a symptom of an effete mind. And with that the whole moral basis of your exasperation cracks and begins to crumble. I ask you, is there anything more exasperating than to feel exasperated and yet to realize that your exasperation is uncalled for, that it has significance only as an item in a psychological or physiological record? Moreover, this form of the malady is by its very nature incurable. It is of no avail to kill the Irishman, because you are not sure of your *right* to kill him, and there is no satisfaction in murdering a man unless you can regard it as your duty. No, there are only palliatives: one must try one of the indirect and innocuous forms of relief—such as writing a silly little essay on the subject!

Editor's Easy Chair

THE MOTOR CARS 'LL GIT YOU, EF YOU DON'T WATCH OUT!

BY EDWARD S. MARTIN

A HEADLINE in the newspaper announces that "Motor Traffic Chokes Detroit." That city, it seems, is unable to find due street room for cars. The city fathers are widening the avenues and a hundred-million-dollar program, extending over fifteen years, is suggested as a remedy.

That makes a picture in the mind of what is happening in this expansive and, incidentally, very expensive civilization in which we are struggling. We all know that they make automobiles in Detroit. It is a speciality of that town and the city takes its own medicine. The paper which has the headline says, "almost everyone in Detroit drives," and that everyone with even five dollars as a first payment is a potential buyer of a car. About 200,000 persons out of Detroit's population of 1,200,000 are said to be employed in automobile factories, and not only make cars, but ride in them. Naturally, the main streets of the town are congested. The specialty that has "made" Detroit has also embarrassed it. The streets are not wide enough and there are not garages enough to hold the cars, so that "all night parking" is remarked as a growing factor, and high-born and shiny cars stand out in the streets in the night watches with their humbler brethren.

The rulers of the city take all kinds of thought about the situation, and talk about streets 120 feet wide and, indeed, have actually planned to make some streets super-highways 204 feet wide, which would give traveling room for eight cars abreast, four going each way. There is a Master Plan, the one calling for one hundred million dollars in fifteen years, that Detroit thinks may possibly make the going more comfortable. But would it?

We all know this story more or less; know it intimately in New York. It is a very expensive story. We see the avenues widening, and all extra space won for the cars by squeezing the taxpayers instantly gobbled up by more cars. We notice the habit of parking cars. One recalls that in earlier times in New York one never saw horses hitched in the main streets. That habit prevailed in the country villages fifty years ago and was pleasant and highly convenient, but one does not recall the evidences of it half a century ago in the main thoroughfares of New York. But now the motor cars stand by the sidewalks, not hitched but not occupied, and one wonders at the patience of a public that allows it and pays the cost of it.

As said, it is very expensive, this motor-car detail of current American civilization. To be sure, the one cheap thing in New York is taxicabs. They are an immense luxury and convenience. The whole motor car innovation is a wonderful luxury, a wonderful convenience, otherwise we should not sacrifice

to it as we do; but it is very expensive. The State of New York is considering a bond issue of three hundred million dollars for the abolition of grade crossings in the State. Of course, that means motor cars. Too many are smashed up at railroad crossings; too many people are killed. There must be many, many families in which the leading item in the cost of living is the car, and the other items are adjusted to what is left after item one is settled for. And there is more to be said for this arrangement than average moss-backs would suppose.

Don't you wonder where it is coming out? Don't you wonder where this phase of civilization of which the triumph of the motor car is so signally a detail is leading us all to? How far beyond calculation it all is!

Will something check the motor car, —the autogyro, maybe? Will relief of the roads come by invasion of the air, or shall we merely digest the automobile, expense and all, or become immune to it? Of course, we may do that, but the thought of it all is tiring. And, indeed, that is the fault of this changing world—it is so tiring. An ordered life is a great conservator of strength; and this disordered life that we now experience is a great consumer of it. "We shall try to live quietly," says a bride. (Another headline.) Oh, yes, but shall we succeed?

If you live in a great city it tires you, or at least draws on your strength, merely to walk in the street. At every crossing you have to take notice not to be run over. We live indeed, wherever we are, practically on a railroad track. Country or town, that is much the same. If we cross the road it amounts to what used to be walking on the track, only it is much more perilous because more cars pass on it. To this condition of things one must pay attention; his mind must be on keeping alive when he goes out. If he crosses the street he must think of nothing else while he is about it. All that draws on strength, not unwholesomely if one has the strength to draw on, but incessantly. What is expected of the rising generation is not only that they shall have the strength to draw upon, but that they will develop an instinctive capacity to handle these things. Meanwhile, all old methods seem slow and the tendency is to drift towards speed in everything. Anyone who lives in the country and is concerned with gardening or agriculture is likely to notice this tendency. A handy man on a farm nowadays will make a garden and run a car. His propensity will be, so far as noticed from this Chair, to drift away from agriculture towards mechanics. Following a horse-drawn plow—weeding a garden—seem tedious exercises compared with driving a power motor or going on the road in a Ford. But the strain of plowing with a horse was less. The strain of weeding a garden was on the back but not much on the nerves. The society of horses and cows and pigs and chickens was as a rule more soothing than the society of motor cars and automatic engines. Nevertheless, we are not going back to the animals for society to the exclusion of our machines. Everything is more imaginable in the way of change than that we should forgo water running in pipes and modern plumbing, or go back from motor cars and smooth roads to horse-drawn vehicles and mud. We may be on the road to destruction with all our mechanisms, but whatever road we are on we shall not turn back. We shall go through to the end of it and get to wherever it leads us.

BUT it is a curious journey. Consider crime! So rampant, so prevalent, so very bold. Pick up any newspaper any day and read about the robberies, the killings, the holdups over night. What does all that mean? We notice that these violent crimes are done mostly by very young men—with some assistance, at times, from young girls. They are amazing! How does it come that these young persons who do them are what they are, and can do

what they do? How does it happen that our apparatus of order is so baffled by them; that they are able to get away with so many of these extraordinary crimes? As to what they are, what minds they have, there are all sorts of theories, as that they are products of the Great War, which taught the use of firearms to four million men and made that knowledge so common and prevalent that it passed along down to the rising generation. The war, too, made killing common and diminished respect for human life. Do you remember the bayonet exercises that were taught to the infantry recruits? Naturally, crimes of violence in such extraordinary quantity as we have are related to war. Perhaps, too, they are related in moderation to the movies, but that is only to say that they come out of current life. The movies come out of current life; so does all the literature of the time; so does crime, and especially these crimes of violence. Somebody else will say that they are due to the decline of religion, and the fundamentalists will lay them to Darwin. Drys will lay them to the Wets and to their disregard of law, and tell us that while we tolerate bootleggers we deserve to have our throats cut and our jewels stolen, and had better expect that. Wets will tell us that the reason why the gunmen operate uncaught is that the time and energy of the police in the United States are taken up trying to prevent the citizens of this country from getting a drink, and trying to keep motor cars moving in the streets. All these causes contribute to our crime records. A magistrate says that the education our schools give turns out boys who know how to play and can dress well, go to the movies, play with the girls, and run motor cars, but do not know a trade and have no means of making a living. When these young men come out of school they feel the need of incomes to support their habits of life—and, not knowing how to earn the money, some of them get it as they can.

Something in that, something in all these causes named. But of all the contributors to crime, the one that is most important seems to be the motor car. It is that, more than anything else, which has changed life. The head devil of all the innovators is Henry Ford. Shall we condemn him for that? By no means! We would not part with what he has accomplished even to get rid of some of its awful consequences. If Henry is the dog, and the bootleggers and the gunmen, and the careless drivers and the corrupted youths, and the general increase of the perils of life are the fleas, still we would not kill the dog to get rid of the fleas. Henry is just something that happened to us—like radium. He personifies a considerable increase of fatalities, but he also personifies an extraordinary detail of what we think is Progress; of the mechanistic civilization, in which we live precariously, move with caution but at increased speed, and have such being as by exercise of vigilance we are able to conserve.

What is the outlook for farming? Apparently, old-style farming is a dead duck, and agriculture is to be saved by organization and machinery. Food will have to be raised and undoubtedly will be raised; some of it as a by-product of country living; the bulk of it by large-scale farming, co-operative marketing, and such contrivances for wholesale production and distribution. Pretty much everything in this world that is not already adjusted to mechanism must soon become so. Henry Ford the other day blurted out a remonstrance against the propensity to join everyone to some organization. Master himself of one of the greatest organizations in the country, he still was all for having people think their own thoughts and invite their own souls. That was curious, but encouraging. With all his wonderful exploits in mass production, he is still an individualist. What he has done is the product of his own thoughts and his own mind and, wonderful to say, he seems still to see the

individual mind and the individual will as primary forces and organization secondary and subject to them.

WELL, that helps to give one hope. All these matters that we have been talking about seem to have to do with the material part of life. They are terrific factors in contemporary existence, but still they are all secondary matters. The primary things are those which concern the spirit of man, what it can see, what it can imagine, what it can aspire to, what it really wants. That is the idea that remains in the back of the mind of those persons, of whom Mr. Coolidge is one, who say that nothing can save the world except religion. That is true, but when they say "religion" as a rule they use a word they cannot define. They don't know precisely what they want, but they know they want something, they feel the need of something, and they call that something religion. Some of the New York newspapers publish on Mondays a page devoted to what the clergymen have said the day before in their sermons. Look over such a page any Monday, and you find the most interesting diversity of ideas put out by these reverend men on this urgent subject of religion, which is like everything else that relates to life in its need of being overhauled, re-stated, and re-expounded, and brought into a more effective and truer relation to life as it is now lived.

For this life we are living does not seem to be a product of the Christian religion as it was understood one or two generations ago; it has come to pass without permission of our pastors and our preachers, come out of the increase of knowledge, and the vigor of the human mind, and is going its course as it must, with no particular concern for what is said in churches, nor for the Sermon on the Mount, nor even for the Ten Commandments. The main effort of the various churchmen has been to try to hobble it with legislation. They have given encouragement to the idea of making conduct good by law; they have supported restrictions of various kinds, most conspicuously "prohibition." Some of them struggle to regulate what the schools shall teach, what plays shall be played, what books shall be read. Most of that effort is beside the mark. This extraordinary mechanistic civilization is a kind of Samson that is not going to be bound by green withs. It is partly good and partly bad, but whatever else it is, it is full of vigor, and is going down the middle of the road considerably regardless of signs put up by the politicians or the clergy. We cannot do much more than watch it. The great trees of humanity will bear their appointed fruits with very little regard to our sentiments as to whether the fruits are wholesome, or otherwise. What will come out of the United States will depend upon what has been put into the United States. What will come out of Britain and France and Western Europe generally will depend upon what has been put into the nations that occupy those parts. What will come out of Russia will depend upon what Russia is—and though she is new in a way, she wasn't made yesterday. So, out of the East, will come what the yellow people and the brown people have in them; groups, no doubt colliding at times with other groups; powers contending; powers cooperating on an unprecedented scale for mutual help and protection, but nobody and no combination of powers likely to be long successful in controlling the destinies of any considerable people on this earth against their will.

Personal and Otherwise

IT IS a novel idea which ***Doctor Joseph Collins*** propounds in the leading article of the month: we do not recall ever before having heard Americans accused of adult-infantilism. Yet how he piles up the evidence in favor of his startling diagnosis! Doctor Collins is a New York neurologist of national reputation who in recent years has turned from the writing of technical books about nervous disorders to such excursions into other fields as *The Doctor Looks at Literature* and *The Doctor Looks at Biography*.

If Doctor Collins's estimate of our emotional age proves depressing, readers may turn for cheer to "Sylvia Goes to the City." ***Philip Curtiss*** often writes for HARPER'S; he made his most recent appearance in our pages only two months ago with "Mrs. Hopple and Daughter." He lives in Norfolk, Connecticut, where he serves, we understand, as a sort of local magistrate—which may throw light on the origin of his story.

Roscoe Pound, who declined last spring the presidency of the University of Wisconsin to remain as Dean of the Harvard Law School, is probably the greatest living authority on the history and development of the common law and a profound student of comparative jurisprudence. (Incidentally, he is a botanist of note.) It is not surprising that with his prodigious knowledge he sees in broad perspective the present crisis in American law, and reveals a general condition of which our crime wave and the notorious congestion of our courts may be merely symptoms.

The other day Sidney Howard, the playwright, heard from a friend in Bangkok. The friend had just received his September HARPER'S with Mrs. Howard's (Clare Eames's) portrait as its frontispiece, and reported that the same night he had seen her at the movies in "Queen Elizabeth." Think of it—Queen Elizabeth, Hollywood style, in Siam! Yet curious as it is that the Siamese should get their English history via California, readers of ***Charles Merz's*** article will realize that it is much more important that they and millions of others are getting from the same source their mental picture of present-day Western civilization. The problem in distortion with which Mr. Merz deals is a capital problem in international relations. Mr. Merz is one of the editors of the New York *World*. To our November issue he contributed a delightful essay on the filling-station as a national institution.

The second story of the month, "Veneer," is the work of ***Lee Foster Hartman,*** associate editor of HARPER'S MAGAZINE.

Gertrude Mathews Shelby, a trained journalist, went down to Florida last summer to witness the biggest land-boom of our generation and the "biggest popular migration of all history." She did more than witness the boom: she took part in it, both as salesman and as speculator. We present her first-hand account of the extraordinary conditions she found in Florida.

H. M. Tomlinson, British journalist, former war-correspondent, and author of *The Sea and the Jungle*, *Tide Marks*, etc., never writes a page without investing it with glamour. HARPER readers will recall that the voyage to the Dutch East Indies which is recorded in *Tide Marks* was undertaken at our suggestion, and that several chapters of the book were published in the Magazine. He now makes a welcome reappearance in our pages after an absence of over a year.

Harry Emerson Fosdick, now on a trip abroad preceding his active duty as pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, New York, writes this month on prayer. Next month he will deal with Science and Religion; many have written on this topic, but few can illuminate it as he does. Our latest letter from Dr. Fosdick comes from Cairo,

and tells of a moonlight sail on the inundation of the Nile up to the very edge of the Pyramids.

Every Englishman who comes to this country, every American returning from abroad, is asked for information on the English unemployment situation. No problem of the England of to-day is more important and on none do Americans find it more difficult to secure reliable information. At our request ***A. G. Gardiner,*** the veteran British journalist (former editor of the London *Daily News*, author of *Pillars of Society, Prophets, Priests, and Kings*, etc.), contributes a judicial appraisal of the situation and of the "dole"—which he prefers to call by another name.

Until about three years ago ***Waldo Frank,*** author of *Holiday, City Block*, and other novels, spent much of his time abroad. Since then he has remained in this country. His reasons for doing so, which he sets forth in his article, are in interesting contrast to the animadversions of various writers who have recently been regaling the public with their preferences for living anywhere but in the United States.

For obvious reasons, the young man who wrote "Is Big Business a Career?" prefers to conceal his identity.

The author of the final story of the month, ***Margaret Culkin Banning,*** is a Vassar graduate, a resident of Duluth, the author of several novels (*Country Club People, Half Loaves*, etc.), and a prize-winner in the recent HARPER Short Story Contest.

J. B. Priestley, whose observations on American fiction follow Mrs. Banning's story, is an astute English critic who writes frequently for the *London Mercury*.

Last winter ***John W. Vandercook*** spent several months in Suriname, on the north coast of South America. Previous to that time he had spent a year at Yale, two years on the stage, and some time in a variety of editorial positions on newspapers and magazines in this country. He returned from his South American trip with a new respect for the ability of the Bushnegroes to cope with jungle conditions in which white men would be utterly helpless. For our October issue he wrote an article entitled "White Magic and Black"; this month he defends vigorously his general thesis that as masters of their environment the blacks of the jungle are "the equals of any race that lives."

The final article of the month is the last of a series of American Revolutionary portraits by ***Philip Guedalla,*** the brilliant Oxonian who became a London barrister and then forsook the law for a career as a historian. His books include *The Second Empire, A Gallery*, and *Masters and Men;* the other HARPER articles in his present series have dealt with George Washington, King George the Third, Lord North, King Louis the Sixteenth, and Cornwallis. These and other portraits will appear presently in book form.

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The poets are ***Hildegarde Fillmore,*** a new contributor who lives in New York; ***Ruth Fitch Bartlett*** (Mrs. Walter S. Bartlett), also of New York, whose poems and articles appear frequently in the better magazines; and ***Walter de la Mare,*** one of the outstanding figures in present-day English poetry. Mr. de la Mare's most recent contribution to HARPER'S was a story, "Mr. Kempe."

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In the Lion's Mouth appear ***Burges Johnson,*** associate professor of English at Vassar; ***Winifred Kirkland*** of Asheville, North Carolina, one of the most accomplished essayists in the country; and ***Charles A. Bennett,*** associate professor of philosophy at Yale, and author of *At a Venture*.

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On ***George Bellows,*** who died a year ago at the age of forty-two, was recently bestowed the highest honor which can be accorded an American painter—a commemorative show at the Metropolitan Museum. Only nine of our native masters had heretofore won this honor: Whistler, Winslow Homer, Chase, Thomas Eakins, Ryder, Abbott Thayer, George Fuller, F. E. Church, and Alden Weir.

Bellows came to New York in 1904 from Ohio, studied drawing and painting under Robert Henri, first exhibited in 1906, won his first prize in 1908 at the exhibition of the National Academy of Design, became an Associate of the Academy the next year

at the age of twenty-seven (the youngest man ever to be elected), and became an Academician in 1913. His work, which thereafter won him innumerable prizes and medals, was strikingly American in character; he not only was little influenced by current European tendencies in painting, but never even set foot in Europe. From the remarkable collection of paintings, drawings, and lithographs in the Metropolitan Museum we have selected for reproduction in HARPER'S MAGAZINE "Lady Jean," a study of his younger daughter painted in Woodstock, New York, in the summer of 1924, only a few months before his untimely death.

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From its earliest beginnings, more than a century ago, it has been a part of the policy of the House of Harper to offer encouragement of every sort to the younger American writers. Our recent Short Story Prize Contest, in which quarterly prizes were awarded, and the Harper Prize Novel Contest, which has become a recognized institution and has already made famous and successful several writers heretofore comparatively unknown, are indications of the purpose of the House of Harper to continue this policy.

With the aim of stimulating the undergraduates in American colleges to creative writing of high quality, Harper and Brothers now announce an Annual Intercollegiate Literary Contest, conducted under the auspices of HARPER'S MAGAZINE. It will be held for the first time during the present academic year, 1925–26, closing May 1, 1926.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE offers a First Prize of $500, a Second Prize of $300, and a Third Prize of $200 for the best pieces of English prose, not more than 4000 words long (or not more than 7000 words long if fiction), written by undergraduates in American colleges and universities.

The judges will be Christopher Morley, author of *Thunder on the Left;* Zona Gale, author of *Miss Lulu Bett* and *Faint Perfume;* and William McFee, author of *Command, Casuals of the Sea,* etc.

The conditions will be published in detail in the next issue of the Magazine. For the present, suffice it to say that the universities and colleges to which it is open are those on the accepted list approved by the Association of American Universities, omitting the technological institutions; that each university or college will be entitled to enter not more than five manuscripts to represent it in the contest; that these five (or less) manuscripts are to be selected by the head of the English department or someone authorized by him for the purpose; that the Contest will close on May 1, 1926, and that we hope to be able to announce the prize-winners by June 1; that the contribution which wins First Prize will be published in HARPER'S MAGAZINE; and that it is the purpose of the House of Harper to establish a relationship with the winners of the prizes and with other competitors whose work shows unusual promise, so as to be of all possible help and encouragement in their future development.

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The Superintendent of the South Dakota Anti-Saloon League writes us as follows:

Gentlemen:

I have a copy of your issue for November, 1925, and have read the article by President Hadley on "Law-Making and Law Enforcement," and it seems to me that the publication of this article is uttering seditious words intended to produce nullification of law in America.

The attention of the Attorney General of the United States has been called to some of these utterances which are believed to be seditious.

Respectfully yours,

H. E. DAWES,
Superintendent.

It is curious how differently different people will react to the same stimulus. Mr. Dawes's letter was followed shortly by one from Flint Wilson, an officer of the Mississippi State Board of Development, from which we quote:

I have read with much interest the article "Law Making and Law Enforcement," by Arthur Twining Hadley, in the November issue of HARPER'S MAGAZINE. I not only read it once, but have referred to it for a week or more. I also referred the article to the directors of our organization.

It seems to me that this article conveys the soundest and most comprehensive treatment of the broad, and at times apparently inconsistent, subject of law-making. I do not know when I have so thoroughly enjoyed or received so much enlightenment on a subject of this kind as I did from this article. . . .

If it is in the province of your policy to permit it, I wish to make the request that you give this organization permission to reprint this article in pamphlet form with due credit to HARPER'S MAGAZINE. We wish to distribute this thought to every member of the legislative body. We also want to put it into the hands of as many citizens and state officials as possible.

It would do considerable good if the fundamental principle so prominently and impressively defined in Mr. Hadley's article were followed by the legislative bodies of to-day.

As these pages go to press the December issue has only just appeared; yet already we are beginning to receive letters about "Living on the Ragged Edge." We have space to publish only one of these here, and have selected the following:

I have just finished reading the article by Anonymous in your December number on "Living on the Ragged Edge." I do not live in New York City but on the campus of a fashionable school in the outskirts of Philadelphia. By reason of our situation my husband and I and our two children must be comfortably and well dressed. We must have a fairly presentable house, entertain occasionally, and in short, keep up our end of the line. So while I am not living in New York City under the exact conditions in which Anonymous finds herself, our positions are nevertheless comparable in many ways, though I probably have an income about one half the size of hers.

I read the article with sympathetic interest until I got to the paragraph in which Anonymous tells of its being necessary for her to keep three maids to do the work for a family of four people. When I read that "economy" I smiled, to put it gently, as hundreds of other housewives in reading it must have done, particularly the women in the Middle West—from which section Anonymous comes—where it is almost impossible to get help except at prohibitive prices. Surely there is something wrong in a scale of living that demands three maids for a small family in moderate circumstances. It has been my experience that a maid costs for her food and the waste she causes just exactly again the amount of her wages. Multiply this with three and it is reasonable enough to suppose that this item alone would be a staggering one

In solving my own domestic problem, I have considered the cost of living from every standpoint. For most of us in a certain stratum of society, it is necessary that certain standards be maintained, but it is also necessary that these standards be maintained at the lowest practical working cost. I believe a wife and mother can accomplish this best by not having a position herself. The exceptions to this rule are women who by reason of great artistic gifts or unusual ability of some kind can make large sums of money. For the average woman, and particularly one who for physical reasons can only work half time, the holding of a position is an actual monetary loss. A woman who is away at business is obliged to have more and higher priced help in her home. Many things which she could easily do for herself and children if at home, she must pay others to do for her. Last but not least, working in an office and properly supervising her home so taxes her strength that only the most robust woman can stand it,—just as Anonymous points out. She does not feel so strong physically as she did five years ago, and in the thirties a few years should not make so marked a difference.

In my own problem I have found, after many experiments, that it is best for me to stay at home and keep a sharp eye on everything purchased for the family. I keep one capable maid for general work. We have good food—I give much time and thought to this matter—and our clothes are of good material and well made. We buy some books and for the rest use a circulating library. We entertain mostly at afternoon tea and small suppers that I can manage with my one maid. I should like to go to the theater and particularly the opera more often than we do; but by steady and constant attention to details all along the line I find that we live comfortably, pay our debts, and have a small surplus at the end of the year. This was not the case when I managed my house in a looser way. There is another side to the question of the advisability of a wife's holding a position. This new freedom which women enjoy has not yet been fully digested by men. They do not know just how to adapt themselves to it. Many women who have gone to work, thinking they would thereby lighten their husbands' burden and at the same time gain a little economic independence for themselves, have been dismayed to find they have weakened their husbands and in some intangible way robbed them of their self-respect. Marriage is a contract in which it is necessary to make nice adjustments.

A last word—and this to you, dear Anonymous. I do not believe you are in such a bad case as you think you are. You know that your husband is in a profession in which he is rising. It is also a profession in which there is no age limit. After a lawyer establishes a practice it is his for life. In addition to this, your husband's mother has some money which in due course of time will come to you and him as a protection in your old age. This also adds to your sense of security though you may not be conscious of it. If the spur of necessity were driven deep in you (and God grant it may never be) many of these needs and desires which now seem so vital to you would drop from you as a useless garment and you would find there is a way to have some of the better things of life and a reasonable amount of comfort too, on a moderate income.

A. L. H.